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URITH

A TALE OF DARTMOOR

BY

S. BARING GOULD, M.A.

AUTHOR OF "MEHALAH," "JOHN HERRING," "COURT ROYAL," ETC.

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URITH: A TALE OF DARTMOOR.

CHAPTER I.

DEVIL TOR.

In the very heart of Dartmoor, far from human habitation, near two thousand feet above the level of the sea, but with no prospect in the clearest weather on any side upon cultivated land, stands at present, as stood two hundred years ago, and doubtless two thousand before that, a rude granite monolith, or upright stone, about fourteen feet high, having on it not a trace of sculpture, not the mark of any tool even to the rectification of its rugged angles and rude shapelessness.

In every direction, far as the eye can range, extends brown desolate moorland,

broken here and there with humps of protruding rock, weathered by storm into the semblance of stratification.

A bow-shot from this upright stone rises such a hump that goes by the name of Devil Tor; and the stone in question apparently formed originally the topmost slab of this granite pile. But when removed, by whom, and with what object, remains a mystery. The beauty of a vast upland region lies not in its core, but in its circumference, where the rivers have sawn for themselves valleys and gorges through which they travel to the lowlands in a series of falls, more or less broken. About the fringe, the mountain heights, if not so lofty as in the interior, show their elevation to advantage, towering out of the cultivated plains or undulating woodland at their bases.

In the centre there is less of beauty, because there is no contrast, and it is by comparison that we form our estimates. In the heart of the upland all is equally barren, and the variations of elevation are small. This is specially the case with the interior of that vast elevated region of Dartmoor, which constitutes bog from which flow the rivers that pour into the Bristol Channel on

one side and into the English Channel on the other.

The monolith, blackened by lichen, standing in such utter solitude, was no doubt thought to bear some resemblance to the Great Enemy of Man, and the adjoining Tor was regarded as his throne, on which he seated himself but once in twelve months, on Midsummer Eve, when the Bale-fires flamed on every hill in his honour. On all other occasions he was erect in this eyrie region, peering east and west, north and south, to see what evil was brewing in the lower world of men.

Devil Tor is reached by very few, only now and then does a shepherd pass that way, as the bogs provide no pasturage. The peat there has grown from hoar antiquity undisturbed by the turf-cutter on account of the remoteness of the spot and the difficulty of transport. The fisherman never reaches it, for it lies above the sources of all streams.

The surface of the moor is chapped and transformed by the chaps into a labyrinth of peaty hummocks and black and oozy clefts, the latter from six to twelve feet deep, running in every direction, and radiating out of each other at all angles. Why the

peat is so cleft is hard to say, there is no running water in the gashes, which in many cases go down to the white granite like the fissures in the body of a leper that in places disclose the bone. It would almost seem as though the bitter cold of this region had chapped its surface, and that no soft warm weather ever came to mollify and to heal its gaping wounds.

Evening had closed in, but not attended by darkness, for the whole sky was glowing. The moor was on fire.

The season was that early spring in which what is locally termed "swaling" takes place, that is to say, the heather is set fire to after the dry winds of March, so as to expose and to sweeten the herbage.

The recent season had been exceptionally dry, even for so rainless a season, and the fires that had been kindled near the circumference of the moor had run inwards, gained the mastery, and rioted over the whole expanse beyond control. They leaped from bush to brake, they crossed streams, throwing over tufts of flaming bracken, pelting the further shore, till that also was ignited.

They circumvented bogs, they scrambled up moraines of granite, locally termed

clatters, they ran up the hills on one side, enveloped their rocky crests in lambent flame, and descended the further side in a succession of bounds, and now they raged unchecked in the vast untrodden interior, where the wiry heather grew to shrubs, and the coarse grass and rushes were dust dry. There the fire ate its way along, a red advancing tide, working to windward, with a low roar and crackle, snapping at every bush, mumbling the tufts of rush, tossing up sparks, flame, and smoke, so that in the general glow and haze every landmark was disguised or effaced.

To no distance could the eye reach, because the whole atmosphere was impregnated with smoke, the smoke red and throbbing with the reflection of the fires over which it rolled. Indeed, the entire firmament was aglow, at one time flashing, at another darkening, then blazing out again as a solar photosphere, responsive to the progress and force of the conflagration.

Crouched at the foot of the great upright stone, that rose over her as the Devil triumphing over his prey, was a girl, with sullen, bewildered eyes, watching the fires as they folded about her, like flame fingers

interlacing, to close in and squeeze, and press the life out of her.

Her hands were bandaged. She rested her chin on them. She was a handsome girl, but with the features irregular. She had large dark eyes — possibly at this moment appearing unduly large, as they stared with a vacant unconcern at the mingled darkness and flame. Her complexion was by nature a transparent sallow, but now it glowed almost vermilion in the light of the burning moor. Her brow was broad, but low and heavy. The face was strange. When the long dark eyelashes fell, then there was in the countenance, in repose, a certain pathos, a look of sadness, of desolation; but the moment the eyes opened, this was gone, and the eyes proclaimed a sullen spirit within, underground, a smoulder of fierce passion that when stirred would burst forth into uncontrolled fury—akin to madness. When the lids fell, then the face might be pronounced beautiful, but when they rose, only the sullen, threatening eyes could be seen, the face was forgotten in the mystery of the eyes.

As the girl sat beneath the great black monolith her brooding eyes were turned on a

brake that exploded into brilliant flame. She watched it burn out, till it left behind only a glow of scarlet ash; then she slowly turned her head towards Devil Tor, and watched the fantastic shapes the rocks assumed in the flicker, and the shadows that ran and leaped about them, as imps doing homage to their monarch's chair.

Presently she unwound the bandages about her hands, and looked at her knuckles. They were torn, and had bled, torn as by some wild beast. The blood was dry, and when she wrenched the linen from a wound to which it adhered, the blood began again to ooze. Her wounds were inflamed through the heat of the fires and the fever in her blood. She blew on them, but her breath was hot. There was no water within the engirdling ring of fire in which she could dip her hands. Therefore she waved them before her face, to fan them in the wind, but the wind was scorching, and charged with hot ash.

Sitting thus, crouched, waving her blood-stained hands, with the bandage held between her teeth, under the black upright stone of uncouth shape, she might have been taken for a witch provoking the fires to mischief by her incantations.

Suddenly she heard a voice, dropped the kerchief from her mouth, and sprang to her feet, as a shock of fear—not of hope of escape—went through her pulses to her heart. Whom was she likely to encounter in such a spot, save him after whom the Tor was named, and which was traditionally held to be his throne?

On the further side of the encompassing fires stood a young man, between her and Devil Tor; but through the intervening smoke and fire she could not discern who he was, or distinguish whether the figure was familiar or strange.

She drew back against the stone. A moment ago she was like a witch conjuring the conflagration, now she might have been taken for one at the stake, suffering the penalty for her evil deeds.

"Who are you? Do you desire to be burnt?" shouted the young man.

Then, as he received no reply, he called again, "You must not remain where you are."

With a long staff he smote to right and left among the burning bushes, sending up volumes of flying fiery sparks, and rapidly came to her, leaping over the fire, and avoid-

ing the tongues of flame that shot after him maliciously as he passed.

"What!" he exclaimed, as he stood before the girl and observed her. Against the ink-black lichened rock, her face, strongly illumined, could be clearly seen. "What? Urith Malvine!"

She looked steadily at him out of her dark, gloomy eyes, and said, "Yes, I am Urith. What brings you here, Anthony Cleverdon?"

"On my faith, I might return the question," said he, laughing shortly. "But this is not the place, nor is this the time, for tossing questions like shuttlecocks on Shrove Tuesday. However, to satisfy you, I will tell you that I came out in search of some ponies of my father's—scared by the fires and lost. But come, Urith, you cannot escape unaided through this hoop of flame, and now that you are contented with knowing why I am here, you will let me help you away."

"I did not ask you to help me."

"No, but I am come, unasked."

He stooped and caught her up.

"Put your arms around my neck," said he. "The fire will not injure me, as I am

in my riding-boots, but your skirts invite the flame." Then he wrapped together her gown about her feet, and, holding her on his left arm, with the right brandishing his staff, he fought his way back. The scorching breath rushed about them, ten thousands of starry sparks danced and whirled round and over them. He took a leap, and bounded over and through a sheet of flame and landed in safety. He at once strode with his burden to the pile of rocks where were no bushes to lead on the fire—only short swath, and a few green rushes full of sap.

"Look, Urith," said he, after he had recovered breath, "between us and the next Tor—whose name, by the Lord, I don't know, but which I take to be the arm-chair of Lilith, the Devil's granddam—do you see?—the very earth is a-fire."

"How, the earth?"

"The peat is so dry that it has ignited, and will smoulder down into its depths for weeks, for months, mayhap, till a Swithun month of rains has extinguished it. I have known a moor burn like this all through the summer, and he that put an unwary foot thereon was swallowed like the company of Korah in underground fire."

The girl made no reply. She had not thanked the young man for having delivered her from the precarious position in which she had been.

"Where am I?" she asked, turning her head about.

"On Devil Tor."

"How far from home?"

"What—from Willsworthy?"

"Yes, from Willsworthy, of course. That is my home."

"You want to find your way back? How did you come here?"

"You ask me two questions. Naturally, I want to get to my home. As for how I came here—on my feet. I went forth alone on the moors."

"And lost your way?"

"Certainly, or I would not be here. I lost my way."

"You cannot by any possibility return direct over the bog and through the fire to Willsworthy. I could not guide you there myself. No man, not the best moor-shepherd, could do this at such a time. But what ails your hands? You have hurt yourself."

"Yes, I have hurt myself."

"And, again, what induced you to come forth on the moor at such a season as this?"

The girl made no answer, but suddenly looked down, as in confusion.

She was seated on the rock of the Tor. Anthony Cleverdon stood somewhat below, on the turf, with one hand on the stone, looking up into her face, that was in full illumination, and he thought how handsome she was, and what a fortunate chance had befallen him to bring him that way to rescue her—not perhaps from certain death, but from a position of distress and considerable danger. Even had she escaped the fire, she would have wandered further into the recesses of the waste, becoming more and more entangled in its intricacies, without food, and might have sunk exhausted on the charred ground far from human help.

As Anthony looked into her face and saw the sparks travel in her eyes as the reflections changed, he thought of what he had said concerning the hidden fire in a moor, and it seemed to him that some such a fire might burn in the girl's heart, of which the scintillations in her eyes were the only indication.

But the young man was not given to much thought and consideration, and the notion that started in his mind disappeared from it as suddenly as it flashed out.

"You cannot remain here, Urith," he said. "I must take you with me to Two Bridges, where I have stabled my horse."

"I should prefer to find my way home alone."

"You are a fool—that is not possible."

She said nothing to his blunt and rude remark, but revolved in her mind what was to be done.

The situation was not a pleasant one. She was well aware that it would be in vain for her to attempt to discover the way for herself. On the other hand, she was reluctant to commit herself to the guidance of this youth, who was no relation, not even a friend, only a distant acquaintance. The way, moreover, by which he would take her home must treble the distance to Willsworthy. That way would be, except for a short portion of it, over high road, and to be seen travelling at night with a young man far from her home would be certain to provoke comment, as she could not expect to traverse the roads unobserved by

passengers. Although the journey would be made by night, the packmen often travelled at night, and they were purveyors, not only of goods, but of news and scandal. She could not calculate on reaching home till past midnight; it would be sufficient to render her liable to invidious remark were she to make this journey with such a companion alone by day, but to do this at such a time of night was certain to involve her in a flood of ill-natured and ugly gossip. This thought decided her.

"No," she said, "I will stay here till daylight."

"That you shall not."

"But if I will?"

"You will find another will stronger than your own."

She laughed. "That can hardly be."

"Why do you refuse my guidance?"

"I do not want to go with you; I prefer to remain here."

"Why so?"

She looked down. She could not answer this question. He ought not to have asked it. He should have had the tact to understand the difficulty. But he was blunt of feeling, and he did not. Without more ado,

he caught her in his arms and lifted her off the rock.

"If I carry you every step of the way," he said, roughly, "I will make you come with me."

She twisted herself in his gripe; she set her hands against his shoulders, and endeavoured to thrust him from her.

He threw aside his staff with an oath, and set his teeth. Her hands were unbandaged. She had not been able to tie them up again, but she held the kerchiefs that had been wrapped round them in her fingers, and now they fell, and in her struggles her hands began to bleed, and the kerchiefs became entangled about his feet, and nigh on tripped him up.

"You will try your strength against me —wild cat?" he said.

She writhed, and caught at his hands, and endeavoured to unclench them. She was angry and alarmed. In her alarm and anger she was strong. Moreover, she was a well-knit girl, of splendid constitution, and she battled lustily for her liberty. Anthony Cleverdon found that he had to use his whole strength to hold her.

"You are a coward!" she cried, in her

passion. "To wrestle with a girl! You are a mean coward! Do you mark me!" she repeated.

"On my soul you are strong!" said he, gasping.

"I hate you!" she said, exhausted, desisting from further effort, which was vain.

"Well!" said he, as he set her down, "which is the strongest—your will or mine?"

"Our wills have not been tested," she answered, "only our strength; your male muscles and nerves are more powerful than those of a woman. God made them so, alack! That which I knew before, I know now, that a man is stouter than a woman. Boast of that, if you choose—but as for our wills!" she shrugged her shoulders, then stooped and recovered her kerchiefs, and began impatiently, so as to cover her confusion, to re-adjust them about her hands, and to twist them with her teeth.

"And you will remain unbent, unbroken—to continue here in the wilderness?"

"My will is not to go with you."

"Then I use the advantage of my superior strength of nerve and muscle, and make you come along with me."

She took a step forward, still biting at the knots, but suddenly desisted, turned her head over her shoulder, and said sullenly, "Drive—I am your captive." The step she had taken was acknowledgment of defeat.

"Come, Urith," said he, picking up his fallen staff, "it was in vain for you to resist me. No one opposes me without having in the end to yield. Tell me the truth—captive—captive if you will, tell me what brought you out on the moor? Was it to see the fires?"

"No, I ran away."

"Why did you run away?"

She was silent and strode forward, still pulling and biting at the knots.

"Come, answer me, why did you run away?"

"I was in a passion, slave-driver! Why do you say to me, 'Come, Urith'? I do not come, I go—driven forward by you."

"In a passion! What about?"

"My mother and Uncle Solomon worried me."

"What about?"

"That I will not tell you, though you beat me with your long stick."

"You know well enough, little owl, that I will not strike you."

"I know nothing, save that you are a bully."

"What! because I will not leave you on the moor to perish? Be reasonable, Urith. I am doing for you the best I can. I could not suffer you to remain uncared for on this waste. That would indeed be inhuman. Why—at sea, it is infamy for a sailor to leave a wrecked vessel uncared for if he sights it."

There was reason in what he said. That she admitted in her heart. In her heart, also, she was constrained to allow that the difficult situation into which she had fallen was due to her own conduct. Anthony Cleverdon was behaving towards her in the only way in which a generous lad could behave towards one found astray in the wilderness. But she was angry with him because he was too dull to see that there were difficulties in the way in which he proposed to restore her to her home, difficulties which she could not, in delicacy, express.

Anthony did not press her to speak further. He led the way now, and she

followed; whereas, at first, she had preceded, in her angry humour, and to maintain the notion that she was being driven against her will. Occasionally he turned to see that she had not run away. She was chary of speech, out of humour, partly with him—chiefly with herself.

The way led from one granite tor to another, through all the intricacies of fissured bog, till at length the two travellers reached a sensible depression or slope of the land, and now the water, instead of lying stagnant in the clefts, began to run, and presently in a thousand rills filtered down a basin of turf towards a bottom, where they united in a river-head.

The aspect of the country at once changed. It was as when a fever-patient passes from incoherent and inarticulate mutterings into connected syllables, and then to clearly distinct sentences. The wandering veins and seams in the bog had found direction and drift for their contents, acquired a cant down which the water ran, and valley, stream, and river were the definite result.

"Now," said Anthony, "our course is clear; we have but to follow the water."

"How far?"

"About four miles."

"And then?"

"Then I will get my horse, and we shall have a direct course before us."

"What, the high road to Tavistock?"

"No. You shall not go that way."

"By what way then will you take me?"

"By the Lyke-Way."

CHAPTER II.

THE LYKE-WAY.

The whole of Dartmoor Proper is included within the bounds of a single parish, the parish of Lydford. The moor belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall, and at Lydford stood the Ducal Castle. For two hundred years this castle has been in ruins, but stands a monument of possession, and just as the estate has been eaten into and pillaged through a long course of years, so has the castle of the Duke been broken into and robbed, to furnish cottages with stone, and cowstalls with timber.

Parishes when first constituted followed the boundaries of manors, consequently, as the Duke of Cornwall claimed the entire Forest of Dartmoor, that whole forest was included within the parish limits. It is the largest parish as to acreage in England, and

has the scantiest population in proportion to its area.

In former times the moor attracted miners, it does so still, but to a very limited extent; extensive operations were anciently carried on in every stream bed in quest of tin.

The vast masses of upturned refuse testify to the vastness of the mining works that once made the moors teem with people. The workers in the mines lived in huts merely constructed of uncemented granite blocks, thatched with turf; the ruins of which may still be inspected. But even these ruins are comparatively recent, though dating from the Middle Ages, for there were earlier toilers on the same ground, and for the same ends, who also lived on the moor, and have also left there their traces; they dwelt in circular beehive huts, like those of the Esquimaux, warmed by a central fire, and covered in by a conical roof that had a smoke-vent in the midst. Tens of thousands of these remain, some scattered, most congregated within circular enclosures, and hundreds of thousands have been, and others are being, annually destroyed. In connection with these are the megalithic

circles and lines of upright stones, cairns that contain tombs made of rude stone blocks set on end, and covered with slabs equally rude.

Who were the people that made of Dartmoor at a remote period a scene of so much activity? Probably a race that occupied Britain before the British, and which was subjugated by the inflowing, conquering Celts.

Throughout the Middle Ages, down to the Civil Wars, the tin was much worked, and men living on the moor also died there; and dying there had to be buried somewhere, and that somewhere was properly in the parish churchyard.

Now, as there is but a single road across the moor from Tavistock to Two Bridges, where it forks, one road going to Moreton, the other to Ashburton, and as the main road was of no great assistance to such as desired to reach Lydford for the sake of burying their dead there, a way was made, rudely paved, and indicated where not paved by standing stones, for the sole purpose of conveying corpses to their final resting place.

This way, of which at present but faint

traces exist, was called the Lyke-Way. Since the establishment of the prison at Prince's Town, first for French captives in the European War, then for Irish and English convicts, a church has been erected, and a graveyard enclosed and consecrated, for the convenience and accommodation of those who live and those who die on Dartmoor. The Lyke-Way has accordingly been abandoned for three-quarters of a century; nevertheless it is still pointed out by the moor-men, and is still occasionally taken advantage of by them.

In former days, when for weeks the moor was covered with snow, and its road and tracks deep in drifts, corpses were deliberately exposed to the frost, or were salted into chests, to preserve them till the Lyke-Way was once more passable.

Where the Lyke-Way touches a stream, there double stepping-stones were planted in the bed, for the use of the bearers, occasionally a rude bridge was constructed, by piling up a pier in midwater, and throwing slabs of granite across, to meet in the midst on this pier; but these were always wide enough to permit of the bearers to cross the bridge with the bier between them.

It is not to be marvelled at that superstition attaches to this road, and that at night, especially when the moon is shining, and the clouds are flying before the wind, the moor-men aver that there pass trains of phantom mourners along this way, bearing a bier, gliding rather than running, shadows only, not substantial men of flesh. And as, in the old days, the funeral train sang hymns as they went along with their load, up hill and down dale, so do the moor-men protest at the present time that when the phantom train sweeps along the Lyke-Way, a solemn dirge is wafted on the wind of such overwhelming sadness, that he who hears it is forced to cover his face, and burst into tears.

It is said that if one be daring enough to hide behind a rock on the side of the corpse-track when the phantom procession is on the move, so as to suffer it to pass near him, he will see his own face upturned to the moon on the bier that goes by. Then must he make the best of his time, for within a year he will be dead.

Along the Lyke-Way, as the nearest road to her home, and also to his own, in defiance of the superstition that clung to it,

did Anthony Cleverdon purpose to conduct Urith.

When she heard him suggest this way, she shivered, for she was, though a strong-minded girl, imbued with the belief of the age. But the power to resist was taken from her. Moreover, along that way there was less chance than on any other of encountering travellers, and Urith shrank from being seen.

On reaching the point where she and her companion touched the Lyke-Way, a point recognizable only by Anthony, who was familiar with it—for here it was but a track over smooth turf—then Cleverdon bade his companion seat herself on a stone and await him. He would, he said, go to the tavern and fetch his horse.

Her opposition to his determination had ceased, not because her will was conquered, but because she was without an alternative course to cling to, without a purpose to oppose to his. She was weary and hungry. She had rambled for many hours before Cleverdon had discovered her, and had eaten nothing. Fatigued and faint, she was glad to rest on the stone, and to be left alone, that she might unobserved give way

to the tears of annoyance and anger that welled up in her heart.

In an access of inconsiderate wrath—wrath is ever inconsiderate—she had run away from home—run from a sick mother—and she was now reaping the vexations that followed on what she had done. Her annoyance was aggravated, not tempered, by the thought that no one was to blame for the unpleasant predicament in which she was placed but her own self.

As Urith sat, awaiting the return of Anthony, gazing around her, it appeared to her that the scene could hardly be more awful at the consummation of all things. The whole of the world, as far as she could see, was on fire; it looked as if a black crust were formed over an inner glowing core, like the coal-dust clotted in a blacksmith's forge above the burning interior. There were wandering sparks ranging over it, and here and there a quiver of lurid flame. All that was needed to excite an universal conflagration was a thrust with an iron rod, a blast of concentrated wind, and then the crust would break up, and through its rents would flare out rays of fire too dazzling to look upon, that would

swallow up all darkness and dissolve mountain and granite into liquid incandescent lava, and dry up every river with a breath. There was water near the rock where Urith sat, and she again unwound her hands and dipped the bandages in the cool stream.

She was thus engaged, when softly over the velvet turf came Anthony, leading his horse.

"Let me look," said he, bluntly; "let me tie up your rags. How did you injure your knuckles?"

She obediently held out her hands.

"I did it myself."

"How? Against the rocks?"

"No—with my teeth."

"What! You bit your hands?"

"Yes. I bit my hands. I was in a rage."

"We men," said Anthony, "when we are angry, hurt each other, but you women, I suppose, hurt your own selves."

"Yes. We have not the strength or the means to hurt others—not that we lack the will—so we hurt ourselves. I would rather have bitten some one else, but I could not, so I tore my own hands—with my teeth."

"You are strange beings, you women," said Anthony. Then he threw the bridle on the ground, and set his foot on it, so as to disengage his own hands.

He took hold of Urith's wrists, and the kerchiefs, one after the other, and arranged the bandages, and fastened them firmly. Whilst thus engaged, he suddenly looked up, and caught her sombre eyes fixed intently on him.

"Would you hurt me—bite and mangle me?" he asked, with a laugh.

"Yes—if you gave me occasion."

"And if I gave you opportunity."

"Assuredly, if I had the occasion and the opportunity."

"Which latter I would not be such a fool as to allow you."

"Opportunities come—are not made and given."

"You are a strange girl," he said; holding her hands by the bandage knots at the wrists, and looking into her gloomy eyes; "I should be sorry to rouse the wild beast in you—there is one curled up in your heart—that I can see. Your eyes are the entrances to its lair."

"Yes," answered Urith, without shrink-

ing, "it is true there is a wild beast in me."

"And you obey the wild beast. It stretched itself and sniffed the moor air—then away you ran out into the wilderness."

He continued to study her face; which exercised a strange fascination upon him.

"Yes; I was in one of my fits. I was angry, and when I am angry I have no reason—no thought—no feeling, nothing save anger. Just as the moor now is—all fire; and the fire consumes everything. I could not hurt my mother—I did not want to hurt my Uncle Solomon. That other —— He was beyond my reach, and so I bit myself."

Anthony made an attempt to shake himself free from the sensation that stole over his senses, a sensation of giddiness. The effort was ineffectual, it lacked resoluteness, and again the spell settled over him; he was falling into a dream, with his hands on her wrists, and her pulses throbbing against his fingers, a dream woven about him, enlacing, entangling mind and heart and consciousness; a dream in which he was losing all power of seeing anything save her eyes, of hearing anything save her

breathing, of feeling anything save the dull throb of her pulse—a dream in which he was being caught and bound, and thrown powerless at her feet—a dream of mingled rapture and pain and undefined terror. She had called herself his captive a little while ago, and now she, without a word or a movement, was subjecting him absolutely.

How long he stood thus fascinated he could not conjecture, he was startled out of it by his horse jerking the bridle from under his foot, and then at once, as one starting out of a trance, he passed into a world of other sensations, he heard the rush of water and the wail of wind, he saw the fires about him, and Urith's eyes no longer filled the entire horizon.

"Come," said he, roughly, as he caught the bridle, "get on the horse; we must waste no more time talking folly." He put his hands under her foot, and with a leap she was in the saddle.

"You can ride, of course," said he, churlishly; he detested the spell that had been thrown over him; the conviction that he had been very near falling wholly into her power.

"Of course I can ride—I am a moor-maid."

With his hand at the bit he urged the horse on, and strode forward, looking down at the turf, without speaking. The sudden drunkenness of brain that had come over him left its vapours that were not withdrawn wholly and at once. But Anthony was not a man to brood over any sensation or experience, and when Urith asked, "Did you find your father's colts?" he recovered his good humour and gaiety, and answered in his wonted tone, "No, the fire must have driven them further north, maybe they are lost in Cranmere." Then, with a laugh, he added, "I have been like Saul seeking my father's beasts, and, like Saul, have found something better." He looked up at her with a flashing eye.

She turned her head away.

"You came to the moors alone?" she asked.

He did not reply, but pointed to the west. "The wind is shifting, I hold. The direction of the smoke and flames is changed."

She did not observe that he evaded giving her a reply to her question.

The way now dipped into a broad valley, where the fire had already burnt, and had exhausted itself.

It lay before them a dark trough, and yet scintillating in points where ashes glowed after the flames had exhausted themselves. An auroral light pervaded the sky overhead, especially bright above the hills to the east, and against it the granite piles of rock on the mountain tops, stood forth as ruined castles crumbling away in the conflagration, and above one huge block, like an altar, smoke rose in columns intermingled with flame, as though on it a gigantic sacrificial oblation were being made.

"I suppose you were angry with me when I snatched you off Devil Tor, and you strove to free yourself?" said Anthony.

"Not angry, but reluctant," she replied; "for I knew that you wished me well, and that your violence was kindly meant."

He drew the reins sharply and arrested the horse, then turned, put his arm over the neck, and looked up at Urith.

"Verily," said he, "I have the fancy that I should like to put you into one of your fits—as you term them."

"Indeed," she answered; "it is a cruel

fancy, for my fits end in some hurt. When the devil entered into the child it cast him into the fire or into the water, and tore him before it came out. You see what one fit has cost me"—she extended her bandaged hands. "But you do not feel how they sting and burn. It may have been rare sport for such as looked on to see that child half-scorched by the fire, half-smothered by the water, and prostrate, mangled by the devil—but I question if any one would have had the heart to invoke the devil to possess the child; yet that is what you would do."

"Nay," said Anthony, a little confounded by her vehemence and the charge against him; "nay, I would not have you again hurt."

"Then would you stand to be torn yourself?"

"What—would you tear and bite me?"

"I cannot say. When I have one of my fits on me I do not know what I am about."

"Are you repentant for your action afterwards?"

"Assuredly I am repentant when I have gnawed my hands, for they are full of pain."

He turned away. The girl disturbed him. The young man was not accustomed to meet with damsels who were not honey and cream, smiles and allurements—the frank avowal of savagery in Urith, mingled with the consciousness that she exerted over him a certain fascination against which he had no counter-spell, caused him uneasiness. He turned abruptly round and went forward with lowered head, and the vapours recently lifted from his brain began to settle over them again.

Presently he came to the side of a foaming tumbling river. He halted, and, without looking into Urith's face, said—

"Now we have come to the Walla, and my cob has been restive at crossing water to-day, shall I help you to dismount? You can go over by the stepping-stones. I must ride him across."

He put forth his hand, but she slipped to her feet unassisted, and handed to him the crop or long-lashed whip that had hung at the saddle-bow, but which she had taken in hand.

"Yes," he said, "I shall require the crop." Then he leaped into the saddle and spurred the horse down into the water.

Urith tripped along the stones till she reached a broad block in the midst of the river. She found no difficulty in crossing, as the light overhead mirrored itself in the water, making of the Walla a very Phlegethon. But for the same reason Anthony's cob objected to enter. He reared and plunged, and when whipped and spurred, wheeled about.

Urith watched the futile efforts of her companion.

Presently she called to Anthony, "The cob will go into the water if you pat him. You further frighten him by your violence when he is already frightened. The river seems to roll down fire and blood."

"What!" laughed Anthony; "Will you teach me how to manage a horse?"

"I have had to do with horses every whit as much as yourself," she replied. "Remember, I am the Wild Maid of the Moors."

He made no reply, but again essayed to force the cob to enter the water. Suddenly Urith, still stationed in mid-stream, uttered an exclamation of surprise, not unmingled with alarm.

She saw black figures emerge on the hill

shoulder, visible against the lurid sky, and then descend along the Lyke-Way, coming along the same track, in the same direction.

At once there rushed upon her the stories she had heard of ghostly trains of mourners, sweeping at night along this road, and of the ill-luck that attended such as cast eyes on them.

"Look!—look!" she exclaimed, now in real terror. "Who are they?—what are they? They are following us, Anthony Cleverdon! Do not let us see them more. Do not let them overtake us."

CHAPTER III.

CAUGHT UP ON THE WAY.

Anthony looked back. Strange was the appearance of the moor side half-lighted by the skies reddened with the reflection of fires beyond the hills, but with its surface travelled over by sparks. An imaginative mind might have thought that mountain gnomes were alert, and were rambling torch in hand over the moor. Now one red spark wandered along in solitude, then out flashed a second, and ran to meet it; as if they were the lights of comrades hailing each other. Suddenly a score sparkled and danced in a ring, and were as suddenly extinguished. Or it might be supposed that the spirits of the primeval tin-workers had returned to earth once more, and were revisiting their ancient circles and avenues

of stone, to perform in them the rites of a forgotten religion.

To the south-east rose Mistor, one of the loftiest summits on the moor, on whose rocky crest, scooped out by wind and water, is a huge circular bowl, called by the natives the Devil's Fryingpan, in which he prepares the storms that lash and explode on the moor. And now it really seemed as though the Spirit of the Tempest were at work, brewing in his bowl.

In the strange after-glow that partially lighted the hill-side could be seen dark figures descending the Lyke-Way, and approaching the ford where Anthony was vainly endeavouring to force his cob to cross. Anthony uttered an oath, and then redoubled his attempts to drive the brute into the water. But it came to the edge, snuffed, and recoiled.

"What is it?" asked Urith, still watching the pursuing shadows.

Urith ran back over the stones.

"Only some folks coming after us. By heaven! I wish I could get this cursed beast over."

"If you take the bridle on one side, I on the other, and coax the horse, we can cross

by the double stones, and he can go in the middle."

"As the bearers with the dead," said Anthony.

Urith patted the frightened beast, talked to him, praised him, and taking the bridle, quietly led him down to the stream. Ever and anon, she turned to look back, and saw the shadowy figures rapidly nearing. Who could they be? Would they recognize her? Were they such as would be likely to recognize her? What, if they knew her, would they think of her being at such a time, and in such a place, alone with Anthony Cleverdon?

Would it be advisable to step aside, and let these travellers pass without seeing her? But she was too ashamed to make such a proposal to her companion. So, as she was caressing the horse, and urging him into the water, these pursuers, whoever they were, drew nearer. She could distinguish that they were mounted.

Anthony stood on the stepping-stones on one side, Urith on those upon the other. The frightened horse cautiously put his hoofs in, snuffed at the water, began to drink, recovered confidence, and allowed himself to be led along through the stream.

They were past the middle of the river when the pursuers came to the side of the stream, and a loud male voice exclaimed—

"There is the runaway, and by God—not alone!"

Urith shuddered, her hand twitched at the bridle, and made the horse start. She knew the voice well. It was not a pleasant one, harsh, and with mockery and insult in its tones. As her hand contracted, so did her heart, and sent a rush of blood tingling to her temples.

"That is Fox Crymes!" she said to her companion, "the last, the very last man I would have had see me here."

"Why the last?" asked Anthony, stepping on the bank, and leading the horse up on the land. "Why the last that you would have see you, Urith?"

"Because it was on his account I ran away."

"What!" laughed Anthony. "Then it is Fox whom you would have bitten, had he allowed you to fasten your teeth on him?"

Urith's colour deepened; if Anthony had had pity, he would not have said this. If he had looked in her face, he would have

seen how dark it was with shame and vexation.

"You wring all out. You are cruel—yes, Fox Crymes," she muttered.

"And I am not surprised. I would like to thrash him," said Anthony. "For one thing, for coming up with us now."

The pursuing party consisted of but three, Fox—his real Christian name was Anthony—and two others, Bessie, the sister of Anthony Cleverdon, and Julian, Fox Crymes' half-sister. Both Crymes and Cleverdon had the same Christian name. Old Cleverdon, the father, had been sponsor to Crymes, and in compliment to him Fox had received at the font his godfather's name.

Fox was the only son of Fernando Crymes. Since childhood he had borne the nickname, partly because of his red hair, partly because of his pointed features, also, in a measure, because it was thought that somewhat of the craft and subtlety of Reynard was intwined in his nature. He did not object to the designation; it had attached itself to him at an early age, when it conveyed no meaning to his mind, and in maturer years he accepted it without demur,

and was perhaps a little proud that he should be credited with superior shrewdness.

After the death of Fox's mother, old Fernando Crymes had married an heiress—a Glanville—and by her had a single daughter, Julian, at whose birth this second wife had died. Fernando Crymes, though belonging to a very ancient and estated family, had frittered away such remains of the property as had come to him, and would have been reduced to threadbare circumstances had not his second marriage rehabilitated him. He was trustee for his daughter, and lived on her estate. His son, Anthony, was but too well aware that the portion of goods that would fall to himself must be small, whereas his half-sister would be wealthy. The consciousness of this disparity in their prospects affected their relations to each other. Julian was disposed to imperiousness, and Fox let no opportunity pass of saying or doing something to annoy her.

"You have played us a scurvy trick, Anthony," said Fox, as he splashed through the river, and came up with the two on the further bank; then pushing close to Urith, whom Anthony had remounted on his

saddle, he peered rudely into her face. He uttered an exclamation of rage as he recognized her, and turned away towards Cleverdon, and said, in a rasping tone, "We awaited you at the tavern an endless age, ever expecting you to come and let us know whether you had found the colts or not. I assured your sister and mine that you were after game of some sort, and the colt-seeking was a mask, but they would not believe me. Finally, I went to the stable, and found that you had slipped away without a word."

"Was I bound to let you know I was going home?" asked Anthony Cleverdon, without an effort to disguise his ill-humour.

"Bound, certainly, by all the ties of breeding and good-fellowship," answered Fox. "But, in good faith, when a woman is concerned, all other considerations are thrown to the winds."

Then he fell back, and addressing his sister Julian and Bessie Cleverdon loud enough to be overheard by those in front, he said, "I never doubted but that Anthony came after something other than colts, and to make a mock of us. I told you as much when we were at the Saracen's Head, and

you scouted my words. You said the Fox was ever suspicious, but the Fox has his eye and his nose and ear keen, and I saw, and smelt, and heard what was hidden to duller senses."

Cleverdon turned round. He was angry, but he said nothing.

Fox Crymes went on, tauntingly. "There is game of all sorts on the Moor; but, good Lord! it is sometimes hard to say which is the game and which the sportsman, and which has been in pursuit of the other."

"Silence that malicious tongue of yours, or I will silence it for you," said Anthony, angrily.

"Oh! I am always to be threatened whenever I draw my bow, but you—are to be scathless, whatever your conduct be."

"You fight unfairly, with poisoned weapons."

"And you retaliate, like a wild man, with a bludgeon," answered Crymes. "Are we to hold our hands when treated by you as it has pleased you? You invited us to attend you to the moor and spend with you a merry day, and then you desert us. Are we not free to question why we are thus treated?"

Then Bessie rode forwards beside Urith,

and asked, "Tell me, how came you here?"

"She lost her way in the smoke, and no marvel," said Anthony Cleverdon. "I discovered her strayed among the bogs, and engirded with flame; and had I not plucked her thence she would have stayed all night."

"But what brought her on to the moors?"

"The same occasion that brought you, Bess—she came to see the fires. She became distraught with the smoke, wandered, and lost all knowledge of her direction."

"It is well, brother, that you found her," said Elizabeth; and then, in a lower tone, "Brother, brother, speak to Julian. You have been short of courtesy to-day, and she resents it."

Anthony shrugged his shoulders.

"I will ride alongside of Urith," said Elizabeth Cleverdon. "You must not allow it to be observed that you lack manners, brother Anthony. You persuaded Julian and me to come with you and see the moor on fire, and you have left us to ourselves, and now disregard her markedly."

Whilst the brother and sister were in conversation near the horse on which Urith was mounted, Julian Crymes passed them

with averted head, and took the lead along the Lyke-Way. Anthony, admonished by Bessie, strode forward after her, but with a frown and curl of the lips.

Julian Crymes was a handsome dark-haired girl, with a rich, warm complexion, and full lips and rounded chin. Her eyes were large, with that droop in the lids that gives an impression of sensuous languor.

She heard Anthony's tread at her side, but did not deign to cast on him a look, neither did she throw a word at him. Indeed, she was angry and offended, her bosom was heaving, her blood was simmering, and her lips she bit to prevent their quiver. Anthony was out of humour at having been caught up by the party, and was conscious that he had not behaved with civility, but was too proud in himself, too indifferent to the feelings of others, to acknowledge himself to be in the wrong, and to make amends for his lack of courtesy to others.

Accordingly they pursued their way, side by side, she riding with averted head, he pacing with knitted brows and downcast eyes, in silence, and for some considerable distance.

The situation was irksome. Each, instead

of speaking, was endeavouring to catch what was said in the rear, each with suspicion that Fox was saying something behind their backs which would cause the left ear to tingle.

Julian was the first to find the situation intolerable, and to break from it. She turned her head over her shoulders and said :—

"Bessie could hardly be persuaded to leave the Saracen's Head, even when she heard that you had taken your horse and had ridden away. She has a marvellous faith in you, not shaken by a thousand evidences that you are wanting in those qualities on which faith can be reared. After this day's experience, even if I at any time shared in her estimation of your qualities of cavalier, I shall cease to do so for the future. The first obligation of a cavalier is to be mannerly towards ladies."

"You had Fox with you. I found Urith lost in the morasses, and was forced to help a damsel who was in jeopardy—that, I take it, is the first duty of a cavalier. You were in no straits, and she was. You had help, she had none."

"You might have called us to aid you in

extracting her from the morass, or in assisting her to reach her home afterwards."

Anthony made no reply to this. No reply was possible.

"Come!" said Julian, the pent-up anger in her heart flashing forth. "Have you no apology to offer for your misconduct?"

"What would you have me say?"

"Nay! It is not for me to put the words into your mouth."

"I have told you my reason."

"A poor and pitiful reason, ungarnished with excuse to hide its sorry nature. If the reason be bad, so much the more should it be trimmed with excuses."

"If I have offended you, I am sorry. I cannot help it."

Julian tossed her head. She was highly incensed. He made no attempt to mollify her.

Fox came alongside.

"I hope, Julian," he said, "that you have soundly rated Anthony for his ill-conduct."

She did not answer.

"We might have had a merry canter home over the turf," continued Fox, "had not Anthony spoiled our fun by setting all our tempers on the edge. But it may be

that it better comports with the character of the Lyke-Way that we should travel over it rather as mourners than as merrymakers, and that, forsooth, we are, bearing dead fellowship between us."

"There is no occasion for that," said Anthony.

"In truth there is, though you who have slain it may not be aware."

"I have no desire to spoil your mirth," said Cleverdon. "Ride on yourself, Fox, with your sister, and leave me behind."

"Julian and I are the worst of company together. We snarl and snap at each other when a third, not of the family, is not by to control us. We will certainly not leave you. I can see that Julian is already in no agreeable mood, and I dare not venture myself in her company unprotected."

"I—!" said Julian Crymes, tossing her head, "I—you mistake, Tony, I am merry."

Fox Crymes laughed mockingly, and spurred on his horse, leaving his sister with Anthony. Bessie brought up the rear with Urith. The train was, as he said, more in character with the purpose of the Way than if it had been composed of merrymakers. Urith and Bessie spoke together in a low

tone; now that Fox had ridden forward, silence again fell on Anthony and Julian. He could not have seen the face of Julian had he essayed to do so, for he walked on the off-side, and she kept her head averted, and he his eyes depressed. She was glad that her face was hidden from observation, so agitated was it with disappointment, wounded pride, and jealousy.

Then Fox, ahead, began to sing to himself in strident tones a snatch of an old ballad, and every word in it fell on Julian's heart as a drop of burning phosphorus that no water will extinguish, but that burns down where it has fallen, burying itself, till it has exhausted its fire.

> If I of marriage spake one word,
> I wot it was not true.
> Man loveth none so easy won,
> So over fond as you.
> All in your garden grows a herb,
> I think they call it rue;
> There willows weep o'er waters deep—
> That is the place for you.

The tears of mortification rushed into Julian's eyes. Her bosom heaved, and sharply she wheeled her horse about, rode

back to those that followed, and said to Bessie, in a voice quivering with emotion, "Go on to the two Anthonies. I want a word with Urith."

Without demur Elizabeth left her place and passed Julian, who drew up across the road to force Urith to rein in. Urith looked at her with some surprise. She did not know Julian except by sight: she had never spoken to her in her life. And now this latter stayed her course as though she were a highwayman demanding her purse.

Julian at first was unable to speak, choked by her passion. She panted for breath and laboured for words, and both failed her. With nervous hands she plucked at her gloves, and dragged rather than drew them off.

"Will you allow me to go forward?" asked Urith coldly.

Then all at once Julian broke forth into a stream of words, disconnected, fiery with the fury that raged within.

"You would snatch him away! You! And you do not know, or you do not care that he and I are destined for each other—have been ever since our cradles. Who are you to come between us? What are you, Urith

Malvine, but a half-savage moor-girl? I have heard of you. Folks have tongues, and tell tales. Why did you come forth on the moor, but because you were aware that he was here? You came to play the forlorn damsel—to attract the pity and ensure the attention of this knight-errant. Are you crafty? I am not. I am straightforward and do not deign to wear a false face, and put the domino on my heart. I have heard of you; but I never supposed you were crafty." She half-started up in her stirrups: "Would we might fight out our quarrel here, on this spot."

She had reared her arm with her whip, the horse started, and she sank back on her seat; she had exhausted her words for the moment. Her blood tumbled, roared, flowed in her arteries like the river on the moor behind them.

"You are mistaken," said Urith with composure. "You flare forth unprovoked; or is it that you are angry with me because I have refused to have anything to say to your brother?"

"To Fox!" Julian laughed contemptuously. "I respect you for that. I never supposed that you or any sane girl would

care for him. But the wherefore of his rejection I did not know till this day. I little suspected that Fox was cast aside because you were questing him who is mine—is mine, do you hear? Do you understand that he is not, and never shall be, yours? He is mine, and neither you nor any other shall pluck him from me. I would we might fight this out together with these weapons!" She reverted to the thought that had occupied her when the horse started and interrupted the thread of her ideas. "You, I see, have Anthony's crop that I gave him on his birthday; and I have but this lady's switch. I do not consider the difference. Just as we are—as we sit on our horses, here, on the turf and heather, with our whips—would to God we might fight it out!"

Again she paused for breath, and panted, and put both her hands to her bounding heart—the hand that held the whip and that in which was the bridle and her gloves.

Then she began to cut with her whip, and the horse she rode to curvet.

"Even with this little lash I would fight you, and slash you up and down across your treacherous face; and if you struck me I

should not feel the blows—but there, it would not be seemly. Alack the day in which we are fallen—when we are covered with a net of such delicacy that we may not lift hand or foot to right ourselves!"

She drew a long breath and laid both her hands on the whip and bridle over the mane of the horse, and, leaning forward, said:

"But who—what could interfere if we went a race down the hill-side among the bogs and rocks, so that one or other would be flung at a stumble of our steeds, and dash out the brains from our heads on the boulders? Would that please you? Would that approve itself to you? I should draw rein and laugh were that to chance to you." Then, in an explosion of jealousy and rage, she dashed her gloves in the face of Urith. "I dare you! Yes, I dare you to wrest him from me!"

Urith sat on the horse unmoved. She was surprised, she was not angry. This was the foaming over of boiling passion, but not a frenzied paroxysm such as came upon herself. The charges brought against her were monstrous, untrue—so monstrous and so untrue that they bore no sting that could pain her.

She replied in her rich deep tones, and with composure. "You mistake. I will not take up your challenge. What is Anthony to me? What am I to him? You are beautiful, clever, and rich—and I," she laughed, "I am but an ungroomed, undisciplined moor colt, who never gave a thought to her looks, whether fair or foul. I am without wit, without scholarship, living with my mother on our poor manor, so poor in means as to be hardly accounted gentle, yet, by birth, too gentle to be esteemed boors. No, I will not contest with you. We are furnished unequally for a contest, you have the long whip and I but the switch."

At that moment the wind, blowing strongly, carried a tuft of ignited gorse overhead, and as it bore the tuft, fanned into flagrance, the glare momentarily kindled the faces of the two girls planted in opposition.

Each saw the other clearer than in daylight, for the light fell on their faces, and the background was sable, unillumined. As Urith looked, she saw how handsome was her opponent, with fluttering locks, her colour heightened by wrath, her full lips

trembling, her eyes flashing. She thought that if she were to match herself against such an one she would come away with ignominious defeat; and Julian, by the same light, and at the same moment, formed her opinion of the rival facing her, recognized her strength, her charm, and felt that this was a girl who would jeopardize her hold over Anthony, and imperil her happiness.

Both were strong women, one threatening, the other reluctant to fight. Would they come into real conflict? Would the reluctance of the one be overborne? Would the threat of the first lead to action? And, if they fought, which would win?

"No," said Urith, "I do not covet the prize. So much for one thing. For the other, as I said, the odds are unequal."

"Then," said Julian, "return me my gloves."

"I suppose they have fallen. Would you have me dismount to search the grass for them? Get off your horse yourself, or call Fox to your aid. I will not stoop to look for them for you."

"You have my gloves. They are not on the ground. Return them to me, or I—— "

Then Urith impatiently whipped her

horse and thrust Julian aside. "This is arrant folly," she said; "I want to be at home. I will be stayed by you no longer."

CHAPTER IV.

IN SUSPENSE.

The ill-assorted, discordant party pushed on as fast as possible along a road that, as it neared inhabited country, became rough and uncertain, and under a sky of diminished light, for the heather on this portion of the moor had been burnt early in the day, and hardly any of the embers remained aglow.

No combination was possible that would content all, for every one except the good-humoured Bessie had some private grudge against another, and Bessie herself was depressed by the general dissatisfaction.

Anthony Cleverdon was vexed that he had not been left undisturbed to convey Urith to her home, though he admitted to himself that for her sake the present

accidental arrangement was the best. Julian Crymes, still incandescent in her anger and jealousy, was unwilling to speak to Anthony, and unwilling to allow him to leave her side to address a word to, and show attention to Urith. When she did speak to him, it was in a taunting tone, and his answers were curt, almost to rudeness.

The temper of Fox Crymes, never smooth, was now fretted to considerable asperity; for he was smarting under the sense of rejection. He had asked for the hand of Urith, and had been refused, and he saw, or suspected that he saw, a reason for his rejection—an attachment for Anthony Cleverdon. Fox was vain and conceited, and envious of his namesake, who had superior physical powers, a finer person, and a better fortune than himself. He was not sorry that his half-sister was disappointed, for whatever might distress her gave pleasure to him. However, the occasion of her distress on this occasion was something that wounded him as well as her.

Fox loved Urith, as far as he was capable of loving, but the jealousy he now felt was no measure of his love; like the famous Serpent's Egg, it was bred of a score of

parents. It was the produce of mortified vanity, of envy of Anthony Cleverdon's superior gifts of nature and fortune, of disappointed avarice, quite as much as of rejected love.

Fox Crymes' suit for Urith was not instigated wholly by his admiration for her charms; it sprang quite as much out of his desire to obtain the small patrimony which would fall to her on her mother's decease.

Willsworthy was an ancient manor, never of great importance, and without fertility, yet not despicable in the eyes of a poor gentleman. It lay on the extreme limits of cultivated land, or rather it may be said to have occupied the debateable ground between the waste and culture. It occupied a hill that ran as a spur out of the moorland, between torrents, and seemed to be what, no doubt, it was, a portion of wilderness snatched from savagery, and hedged in. It possessed no good soil, it lay too high for wheat to ripen on it, it was destitute of those pasture meadows by the waterside, where the grass grows knee-deep, and is gold-sprinkled in spring with buttercups; it was dominated by rugged tors, and stood near the entrance of the gorge of the Tavy,

where it roared and leaped, and shot as it came down into the lowlands, and with it came down the cold blasts that also roared and whirled, and beat about the lone manor of Willsworthy.

Mrs. Malvine talked disparagingly of her farm; her brother, Solomon Gibbs, averred it was an estate on which to starve, and not to live. Urith accepted their verdict as final, she knew the need for money that ever prevailed in the house; and yet Fox Crymes cast greedy eyes upon the estate. He saw that it possessed capabilities that were disregarded by the widow and her brother. The manor owned considerable rights. It had the freedom of the moor, to send out upon it an unlimited number of sheep and cattle and colts; at a time when English wool was fetching a high price, and was exported to the Mediterranean, to Cadiz, to Leghorn, to Palermo, to Marseilles, this was important,—it afforded exceptional opportunities of making money. There needed but the initial outlay on the stock, their keep was free. Not only so, but sheep in lowlands were, in wet seasons, afflicted with disease which slew them in great numbers, which sometimes exterminated

entire flocks. But sheep on the moor were never known thus to suffer, they enjoyed perfect immunity from the many maladies which attend keeping them on cultivated land.

The climate in the West of England is so mild that it was possible to let the sheep run on the moor through the major portion of the year; only for a few months in the depth of the winter, only when frost bound, or snow whitened the moor, was it needful to provide them with food; and the meadows of Willsworthy, though they did not produce rank grass, yet produced hay that was extraordinary sweet and nutritious, and in sufficient abundance to support a large number of sheep and cattle for the short time during which they were debarred from foraging for themselves. Anthony Crymes saw plainly enough, that if he had the management of the estate of Willsworthy he would make it a mine of gold; and that the reason why it did not now flourish was lack of capital to expend on the acres, and mismanagement. Anthony Crymes knew that some money would come to him from his father, not indeed much, but just sufficient for his purpose, should he acquire this property—and he was ambitious of obtaining it.

At present, Mrs. Malvine entrusted the conduct of the farm to her brother Solomon who belied his name; he was a man without any knowledge of farming, and with no interest save in his violin, and who took delight only in good company. The farm was allowed to take its course, which was naturally a retrograde one,—a relapse from former culture into pristine wilderness.

At the period of this tale, some two hundred years ago, every squire farmed, if not his entire estate, at all events a portion of it. Men of ancient pedigree, proud of their ancestral properties and mansions, of their arms and their alliances, did not disdain to ride to market and cheapen cattle.

The Civil War ruined most of the squires who had taken up arms for the King, litigation ruined others; then came in the great merchants, who bought the old owners out, and established themselves in their room. They understood nothing of farming, and esteemed it despicable and unworthy of their new-fangled gentility to pursue it.

With the gall of envy bitter in his heart did Fox see the other Anthony walk alongside of Urith, and assume towards her an

intimacy to which he himself had never attained. The girl had ever avoided him, had treated him with coldness tinged with ill-disguised disdain. She had not made that effort to veil her dislike which will gloss over a repulse. Fox saw another man, better favoured by Nature than himself, reach at a bound a position he had laboriously tried to mount, and had failed.

Hall, or as the country-folk called it, "Yall," was the house of the Cleverdons. It had belonged to the Glanville estates—had been bought by old Judge Glanville, in the reign of Elizabeth, who had founded the family. The Glanvilles had flourished for a while, and had spread over the country-side, taking up estate after estate, and had collapsed as suddenly as they had risen. The Cleverdons had been farmers, renting Hall, and when that estate was sold old Cleverdon by some means got together sufficient money to purchase it, and since the purchase had laid out considerable sums to transform what had been a modest farmhouse into a pretentious squire's mansion.

Old Anthony was in that transitional state in which, passing from one rank of

life to another, he was comfortable in neither. He was sensitive and ambitious—sensitive to slights, and ambitious to push himself and his son into a better social position than that which had been occupied by his ancestors, and, indeed, by himself in early life. The Crymes family had been connected with the Glanvilles by marriage, and now old Anthony schemed on the acquisition of another portion of the Glanville property, through the marriage of his son and heir with Julian Crymes. The old man's success had fostered his ambition. He indulged in a dream of the Cleverdons, by skilful management, assuming eventually the position once maintained by the Glanvilles.

The Civil Wars had produced vast displacement in the social strata. The old gentry were failing, and those who had taken part with neither side, but had waited on their own interests in selfish or indifferent neutrality, were rewarded by emerging, where others were falling into ruin, into ripe prosperity. After that Anthony Cleverdon, the elder, had acquired the freehold of Hall, he had become a widower, and showed no disposition to take to himself another wife.

His marriage had not been a happy experience, and none had felt the disagreement in it more than Elizabeth, his eldest daughter, who, after her mother's death, had been called to manage the household. If the opinion of Magdalen Cleverdon were to be taken—the unmarried sister of Anthony, senior—who lived in a small house in Tavistock, the blame of the unhappiness of her brother's married life lay with his wife; but then the judgment of Magdalen was warped and partial. When Anthony brought home his young wife, she,—Magdalen—had endeavoured to remain at the head of the house, to interfere where she could not direct. But Mrs. Cleverdon had taken a very decided line, and refused all intermeddlement, and Magdalen, after a sharp struggle for supremacy, had left the house routed. Disappointment had embittered her estimate of her sister-in-law.

But there were other and more substantial grounds for her charging her sister-in-law with having rendered the marriage an unhappy one. Mrs. Anthony had been a portionless girl, the daughter of a poor parson; Margaret Penwarne might have been regarded as a suitable match socially,

but pecuniarily she was most unsuitable, especially to an ambitious and money-grasping man.

What her brother could find to admire in Margaret Penwarne, Miss Cleverdon protested she never could see—she entirely forgot that Margaret had been endowed with surpassing beauty.

Others beside Magdalen Cleverdon had marvelled at the choice of Anthony, knowing the character of the man. What could induce a man, whose main features were ambition and greed, to select as his partner one who had not a penny, nor was connected with any of the gentle families of the neighbourhood? Magdalen had not reckoned on the girl's beauty; the others who wondered had not counted on Anthony's ambition, which would exert itself in other directions than they considered. His ambition was deeply tinctured with, if it did not originate in, personal vanity. Vanity is but ambition in a fool's cap, and that of Cleverdon was well hung with bells. Because he considered himself the richest man of his class in the neighbourhood, he esteemed himself also irresistible as a wooer. He had been treated with considerable

severity by his father in his early years, for the old man had been a strait Puritan, though not such an one as to risk any money for his cause, or compromise his safety for it in any way. He allowed his son no freedom, consulted his wishes in no particular, and allowed him no pocket-money. When the old man died, Anthony was left with a good deal of hoarded money, and freedom to act as he listed. His fancy was taken by Margaret Penwarne, and his vanity and ambition stimulated by the knowledge that she was already the object of the attentions of Richard Malvine, the son of a neighbouring parson, without profession and without inheritance. Richard Malvine was a handsome man, and Margaret Penwarne certainly was attached to him, but the marriage could not be thought of till Richard had a competence on which to support himself and a wife. Anthony Cleverdon entered the lists against the handsomest young man in the district, but he had money and a good farm to set against good looks. He and Richard had been together at the Grammar School, and had been rivals there, Richard ever taking the lead, and on one occasion had thrashed

Anthony severely. It was with eagerness that Cleverdon seized the opportunity of gratifying his malice by snatching from Malvine the girl of his heart, and it flattered his vanity to have it said of him that he had won the most beautiful girl of the district over the head of the handsomest man. Margaret struggled for some time between her affection and her ambition; the urgency of her father and mother prevailed, she cast off Malvine and accepted Cleverdon.

Anthony Cleverdon's pride was satisfied. He had gained a triumph, and was wrapped up in the sense of victory for a while, then the gloss of novelty wore off, and he began to regret his precipitancy in taking to him a wife who brought nothing into the family save good looks. The thriftiness of the father now came out in the son. He did not grudge and withhold money where he could make display, but he cut down expenses where no show was made, to the lowest stage of meanness. Margaret's father died. She thought to take her mother to live with her at Hall, but to this her husband would not consent, nor could she wring a silver coin from him wherewith

to assist her mother, reduced to great poverty. This occasioned the first outbreak of domestic hostilities. Margaret was a woman of temper, and would not submit tamely to the domination of her husband. His sister Magdalen took sides against her, and fanned the embers of strife when they gave token of expiring. If Margaret had been of a meek and yielding temperament, the marriage might not have been so full of broils; her husband would have crushed her, and then ignored her. But her spirit rose against him, and stirred the discord that was only temporarily allayed. She could not shut her eyes to his infirmities, she would not condescend to flatter him. In her heart she contrasted him with the man she had loved and had betrayed; her heart never warmed to her husband, on the contrary, indifference changed into hatred. She made no scruple about showing him the state of her mind, she pitilessly unmasked his meannesses, and held them up to mockery; she scoffed at his efforts to thrust himself into a position for which he was not born; he found no more penetrating remorseless critic of all he did, than his own wife.

Anthony Cleverdon believed, and was justified in believing, that his old rival, Richard Malvine, stood between him and domestic peace, as a shadow that blighted and engalled his relations to his wife; that, though he had triumphed formally over his rival, that rival had gained the lasting and substantial success. Anthony Cleverdon might prize himself as high as he pleased, but he could no longer blind himself to the fact that his money bags, which had won his wife for him, were unavailing to buy her affections, and secure to him the fruits of his triumph.

This consciousness stimulated his hatred of Malvine to fresh acridity, and in his meanness, he found a base satisfaction in humiliating his wife by every means in his power, and on every available opportunity.

The birth of Bessie did not serve to unite the pair, for Anthony Cleverdon had set his heart on having a son, and when, after the lapse of a considerable interval of time, the desired son arrived, it was too late to serve as a link of reconciliation. Mrs. Cleverdon died shortly after his birth, her only regret being that she had to leave her daughter, whom she loved with double

passion, partly because her desolate heart naturally clung to some object, and had none other to which to attach itself, partly also because little Bessie was totally disregarded by her father.

Richard Malvine consoled himself for his disappointment by marrying Marianne Gibbs of Willsworthy; he took her for the sake of Willsworthy, as Margaret Penwarne had taken Anthony Cleverdon for the sake of Hall. He was a feckless man, who had lived at home in the parsonage with his father, had hunted, had shot, and had never earned a penny for himself. He died, thrown from his horse, in hunting, a few years after his marriage, leaving an only child, Urith.

The death of the mother produced no alteration in the conduct of Anthony Cleverdon towards her daughter. What love he had in his heart was bestowed on his son—the heir to his name and estate.

In nature all forces are co-related. Indeed it is said that force is a pure and unique factor, and that light, heat, sound, &c., are but various manifestations or aspects of the one primal force. It would be hard to say whether old Anthony's love

for his boy might not be considered as another phase of his ambition. He had never himself been a firm-built handsome man; undersized and of mean appearance, he had felt the slight that this physical defect had entailed on him. But the young Tony was robust of constitution, burly of frame, and had inherited his mother's beauty. At Hall, from the hour of his birth, young Anthony had become a sovereign, and every one was placed beneath his footstool. Every inmate of the house laboured to spoil him, either because he was himself provocative of love, or out of a desire to curry favour with the father. He tyrannized over his sister, he was despotic with his father, he was wayward and exacting with the servants. Nothing that he did was wrong in his father's eyes; he grew up into manhood demanding of the outer world, as a right, that which was accorded to him in his home as a favour.

CHAPTER V.

THE GLOVE TAKEN UP.

Every member of the little party felt sensible of relief when they came out on the high road and left the moor behind. For some time all had been silent: the efforts to start and maintain conversation had signally failed, and a funeral party would have been livelier.

As soon as the hoofs of the horses rang on the roadway, the fetters that had bound the tongues were thrown aside, and a few words were interchanged.

After ten minutes or a quarter of an hour a little tavern by the wayside was reached, named the Hare and Hounds; and then Anthony Cleverdon laid his hand on the bit of the horse Urith rode.

"My cob must bait here," he said—"at

least, have a mouthful; so must you. I will go in and see what can be provided, and bid the landlady lay the table."

"I thank you," said Urith; "but I desire to go home at once. The distance is in no way considerable. I know where I am. But surely I can hear my uncle's voice."

That individual appeared at the open door. He was a stout man, with a very red face and a watery eye. His wig was awry. He stood with a pipe in one hand and a tankard in the other.

"Aha!" shouted Solomon Gibbs. "I said the truth! I knew that it was in vain for me to go in quest of you on the moors, niece. Told your mother so; but she wouldn't believe me. Come on—come, and let's be jolly—drive away dull melancholy! I knew that you must come on to the road somewhere; and, if on to the road, then to the inn. For what is the inn, my boys, but the very focus and acme to which all gather, and from which all radiate? Come in—come in."

"I wish to push on," said Urith.

"How can you without my cob?" asked Anthony, roughly. "I have said—she baits

here. You, also—you must be perishing for food. We all are; have been mum all the way home—no fun, no talking. So, come in."

"That is right—urge her, young man, to follow the advice of age and experience," shouted Mr. Gibbs.

Then he began to sing:

> Come my lads, let us be jolly,
> Drive away dull melancholy,
> For to grieve it is a folly
> When we're met together.
>
> So, my friends, let us agree,
> Always keep good company,
> Why should we not merry, merry be
> When we're met together?

He brandished his tobacco-pipe over his head, in so doing striking his wig with the stem, and at once breaking the latter, and thrusting the wig over his ear, and then dived into the alehouse again. He was half-tipsy.

"You are right," said Elizabeth to Urith. "You must go on. Your mother is anxious, probably in a state of serious alarm."

"My uncle's horse is in the stable, I

doubt not," answered Urith, "and as he will not be disposed to leave till he would be unfit to accompany me, I will borrow the horse, and send it back by a servant."

"I will accompany you," said Elizabeth, "and the serving man that brings back the horse can attend me. The distance is inconsiderable, yet you must not at night travel it alone. Fox and Julian have, I see, turned their horses' heads homewards without bidding us a farewell. I cannot stay outside whilst Anthony is within, and I do not care to enter when men are drinking."

"Your brother will hardly leave you alone outside."

"My brother will probably forget all about me when he gets with Mr. Gibbs and others who can sing a good song and tell a merry tale."

She said this without any reproach in her tone. She was so accustomed to be neglected, forgotten, to find herself thrust aside by her brother, that she no longer felt unhappy about it, she accepted it as her due.

Urith sent a stable-boy for Mr. Gibbs' horse, and, having mounted it, gratefully

accepted Bessie Cleverdon's company for the ride of three miles to Willsworthy.

Bessie knew Urith very little. Old Mr. Cleverdon did not care that his children should associate with the Malvines. His bitterness against the father, Richard, overflowed all his belongings—wife and child and estate ; but he published no reasons for his dislike to association with the owners of Willsworthy, who, moreover, on account of their poverty, kept to themselves. The Cleverdons mixed with those who were in prosperous circumstances, and kept themselves, or were kept, aloof from those on whom Fortune turned her back. Mrs. Malvine had for some time been a woman in failing health, and, having no neighbours, Urith had grown up accustomed to be solitary, and not to know the value of the friendship, or at least the companionship, of girls of her own age and rank. She was too proud to associate, like her Uncle Solomon, with those of a lower grade, and she had not the opportunity of forming acquaintanceship of those fitted to be her comrades.

As Urith rode beside Bessie, her heart stirred with a senastion of pleasure strange

to her. There was a kindness, a sympathy in the manner of Elizabeth Cleverdon that found a way at once to Urith's heart, and she warmed to her and shook off reserve. And Elizabeth on her side was touched by the simplicity, the loneliness of the girl's mind, and when they reached the entrance gates to Willsworthy she held out her hand to Urith, and said—

"This must be the beginning of our friendship. I do not know how it is that we have not met before, or rather, have not met to make acquaintance. Promise me that you will not let this be the beginning and the ending of a friendship."

"That lies with you," said Urith, with timidity. It was to her too surprising a glimpse into happiness for her to trust its reality.

"If it lies with me," said Elizabeth, "then you may be assured it will be warm and fast; expect to see me again soon. I will come over and visit you. But here—let us not part thus. Give me a kiss and take mine."

The girls drew their horses alongside of each other and kissed. The tears came into Urith's eyes at this offered and given

pledge of kindness. It was to her a wholly new experience, and was to her of inexpressible value.

Then Urith called a serving man, alighted, and delivered her horse up to him that he might attend Bessie Cleverdon on her way back to the Hare and Hounds, and leave it there for her uncle when it pleased Mr. Solomon Gibbs to return home.

Bessie found that her brother was angry and offended when he came out of the alehouse and discovered that Urith had departed without a word; he had felt himself obliged to wait for his sister, because it would not be seemly to allow her to ride home in the dark alone; but he vented his ill-humour on her when she appeared. Bessie bore his reproaches with patience. She was accustomed to be found fault with by her father, and less frequently, nevertheless sometimes, and always unreasonably, by her brother.

"I've promised the ostler a shilling to attend you to Hall," said Anthony. "There is Fox returned, and there is Solomon Gibbs here, and—I don't feel inclined to go home."

"Father will be ill-pleased at your

remaining away so long," remonstrated Bessie.

"Father has seen so little of me to-day that another hour's absence won't signify. The weather is going to change—we shall have a thunderstorm. Get home as fast as you can. Here, Samuel, attend my sister."

Then Anthony returned to the ale-house.

At Willsworthy, Urith had stood for a moment in the porch in hesitation. She knew that she deserved to be reproached for her conduct, and she expected it. Her mother was not a person to spare words. She was repentant, and yet was certain that directly her mother addressed her with rebuke her spirit would rise up in revolt.

To her surprise, when she did enter her mother's room, Mrs. Malvine said no more than this, "Oh, Urith! What a many hours you have been absent. But, my child, what is that? You have gloves hanging to your dress."

Urith stooped and looked. It was as her mother had said—the gloves of Julian Crymes had not fallen to the ground, they had been caught by the tags in the gown of Urith, and hung there. She disengaged them, and held them in her hand. She had unwittingly taken up the gage.

CHAPTER VI.

MAGDALEN'S PLANS.

Magdalen Cleverdon had come out for that day from Tavistock to visit her brother at Hall. She did not appear there very often, but made it a point of duty to visit Hall once a quarter. Old Anthony had not interfered when his wife resisted the interference of her sister-in-law, and discouraged her visits to the house, and after his wife's death he had not invited her to be more frequent in her expeditions thither; nor had he shown the slightest inclination to defer to her opinions, and attend to her advice.

Magdalen's visits can hardly have conduced to her own pleasure, so ungracious was her reception when she appeared, except only from Bessie, who was too tender-hearted to be unkind, unconciliatory to any

one. Anthony senior regarded and spoke of his sister as an old and stupid harridan, and the younger Anthony took his tone from his father, and did not accord to his aunt the respect that was due to relationship and age.

Although one of her periodical visits to Hall usually brought on Magdalen a rebuff, yet she did not desist from them, partly because it satisfied her curiosity to see how matters fared in the old house, and partly, if not chiefly, because she gave herself in Tavistock considerable airs as the sister of the Squire of Hall, and she liked to appear to her neighbours as if on the best of terms with her kindred there.

Magdalen had never been pretty. Her's was one of those nondescript faces which Nature turns out when inventive faculty is exhausted, and she produces a being, much as a worn-out novelist writes a tale, because she is expected to be productive, though she has nothing but hackneyed features to produce. Or her face may be said to have resembled a modern hymn-tune that is made up of strains out of a score of older melodies muddled together, and void of individual character. Magdalen had, how-

ever, not a suspicion that her personal appearance was unattractive. If she had not been sought in marriage, that was due wholly to the inadequate manner in which she had been provided for by her father's will; he had, she held, sacrificed her to his ambition to make a rich man of Anthony.

She was a short, shapeless woman, with a muddy complexion and sandy hair, now turning grey, and therefore looking as if it were full of dust. Her eyes were faded, so were the lashes. She had bad teeth, and when she spoke she showed them a great deal more than was necessary. Any one conversing with her for the first time found nothing in her to notice except these teeth, and carried away from the interview no other recollection of her than one of—teeth.

She made a point of being well-dressed when she made her periodical visits to Hall, to show her consequence, and to let her brother see that she held herself in condition equal to his pretensions.

When she learned that her nephew and niece were not at Hall, but had gone to the moor for the day to watch the fires, and to endeavour to recover some colts that had

been turned out on it by old Cleverdon, she expressed her satisfaction to her brother.

"It is as well, Tony," she said, "for I want to have a talk with you; I am thinking——"

"What? Talk first and think after? That is the usual way," said Cleverdon, rudely.

Magdalen tossed her chin. She did not think it prudent to notice and resent her brother's discourtesy. She was not likely to gain much by flattering or humouring him; but to quarrel with him was against her wishes.

"Really, Tony, I have your interests so much at heart——"

"I never asked you to cupboard them there; but, if they be there, turn the key on them, and let them abide where they are."

"You are clever and witty—that every one knows—and you like to snap your lock under my eyes and make me wince as the sparks fly out; but I know very well there is no powder in the barrel, and I do not mind. You really must attend to me, brother. There has been so much small-pox about, and it has been so fatal, that

upon my word, as a woman, you should lend me your ear."

"What has the small-pox to do with my interests?"

"Much. Have you made your will, or settlement of the property?"

"What now!" exclaimed Anthony Cleverdon, roughly. "You came to scare me with thoughts of small-pox, and want me to draw my will and provide for you?"

"About that latter point I say nothing, though I do feel that I was ill-treated by my father. You had the kernel and I the rind of the nut."

"I dispute that altogether. You are an encumbrance on the estate that I feel heavily."

"I am likely to encumber it somewhat longer," said Magdalen, not showing resentment at his brutality. "I do not fear the small-pox. I have had it, and it has marked me; though not so as to disfigure. The Lord forbid!"

Observing that her brother was about to make a remark, and being confident that it would be something offensive, she hastily went on: "But what, Tony—what if it were to attack your Anthony? What if it

were to take him off? You have but a single son. To whom would Hall go then?"

Old Squire Cleverdon started to his feet, and strode, muttering, about the room.

"Ah! It is a thought to consider. The Knightons have lost their heir, and he was a fine and lusty youth. Our Anthony is so thoughtless: he runs where he lists, and does not consider that he may be near infection. Please the Lord nothing may happen; but suppose that he were carried off, who would have Hall? Bessie?"

"Bessie! Are you mad?" Old Cleverdon put his hands in his breeches-pocket and turned and scowled at his sister.

"No. I reckon Bessie would be put off with scant treatment, like myself. Then, Luke?"

"Luke!" Cleverdon burst out laughing. "Never a parson here in Hall, if I can help it. A shaveling like he——"

"Then, who would have it?"

"Not you, if you are aiming thereat," said Cleverdon.

"I am not aiming at that. Such a prospect never rose before me. I do not want Hall. I could not manage the estate."

"I shall take care you have not the chance."

"I have no doubt you will. But consider what are the accidents of life. If you were to lose Anthony——"

"But I shall not. Anthony is flourishing, and not a thought of small-pox, or the falling sickness, or the plague about him. He is sound as a bell; so have done with your croak, you raven. I will call up the servants and have in dinner. You can eat, I suppose?"

"Yes, I can eat, and digest your unkindness; but I cannot forget my anxiety. I am considering the welfare of the family. I am looking beyond myself and yourself. You have raised the Cleverdons from being tenant-farmers into being gentlefolks. You have been to the Heralds to grant you a coat of arms and a crest, and now every one calls you the Squire, who used to call your father a farmer. You have altered Hall into a very handsome mansion, that no gentleman of good degree need be ashamed to live in. I consider all that, brother, and then I think that you are no fool, that you have wonderful wits to have achieved so much, and I am only anxious lest after having

achieved so much for the family and the name of Cleverdon, all should go down again, as it did with the Glanvilles—just because there was no heir male."

"Have done with your croak—here comes dinner."

During the meal old Anthony was very silent. He pulled long and often at the tankard, and neglected the courtesies due to his sister as a guest. She observed that he was uneasy, and was wrapped in thought. What she had said had stuck, and made him uncomfortable. She was too shrewd to revert to the topic during dinner, and when it was over he went out, and left her alone. She knew her brother's ways, his moods, and the turns of his mind, and was convinced that he would come back to her presently and broach anew the subject.

She leaned back in the arm-chair, and indulged herself in a nap. The doze lasted about three-quarters of an hour. Whilst she slept her brother was walking about the farm, in great restlessness of mind and body. He was quick-witted enough to see that Magdalen was right. He could not count on matters not falling out as she had said, and then all his labour to build up the

Cleverdons would come to naught like building up a pack of cards. His son was the main prop of the great superstructure raised by his pride and ambition. If his son, by the dispensation of Providence, were to fail him, he had none to sustain the succession save his daughter Bessie and her cousin Luke, a delicate, narrow-chested lad, who had been an encumbrance thrown on him, had been reared by him, and sent to school by him, and then thrust into sacred Orders as the simplest way of providing for him, and getting him out of the way. Hall to pass to Bessie or to Luke! The idea was most distasteful to him.

He returned to the oak parlour, where he had left his sister, and shook her till she roused from her nap.

"Sit up—gather your senses! You do not come here to sleep like a frog," said old Anthony with his wonted rudeness.

"I beg pardon, brother. I was left alone, and had nought to occupy my mind, and dozed for a minute."

"I say to you, Mawdline!"—Squire Cleverdon paced the room with his hands knotted behind his back, writhing with the inward agitation of his nerves—"I tell you,

Mawdline, that you did not come here to scare me about small-pox without some design lurking behind. Let me hear it. You have emptied the pepper-box, now for the salt-box."

"I do not know anything of a design behind," answered Magdalen, rallying her scattered senses, and then plunging into the main communication with less caution than if she had been fully awake; "but I think, brother, you should get them both married as quickly as you may."

"Both!—what Anthony and Bess?"

"To be sure. Anthony might take Julian at any time; and for Bessie——"

Cleverdon laughed. "I never heard that Bessie had a gallant as yet, and she never had good looks to lure one. If Tony takes a wife, that is sufficient."

"No, brother, it is hardly sufficient. He might, if he married, chance to have no children. Besides, it is well to have alliances on all sides. If only I had married——"

"Fernando Crymes," muttered her brother. "You tried hard for him before he took his first wife."

Magdalen tossed and shook her head.

"You indeed misunderstand me. You try to provoke me, brother; but I will not be provoked. I am too desirous to advance the family to be browbeat by you and forced to hold silence. Elizabeth is getting forward in years, and she might be the means of alliance to a good family that would help to give ours firmer hold in the position it has won. There is Anthony Crymes, for instance."

"What!—Fox for Bessie? This is sheer folly."

"Yes, Fox. What against him?"

"Nay, naught other against him, save that he does not lay his fancy to Bessie."

"I am not certain of that. Why else has he rid this day to the moor? He has not gone for love of his sister, that all the world knows. Now see this, brother Tony. If you was to marry Anthony to Julian and Bessie to Fox, then you would be close allied to one of the best families of the country-side, and he who would lift a word against you would rouse all the Crymes that remain. They were not unwilling to draw to us, or else why did Squire Crymes bid you to be his son's godfather? Fox will not be rich, but he will have something from his

father, and that will be enough with what you let Bessie have to make them do well. Then, if there come a family of children on either side, it is well, for there will be a large kindred in the district, and if there be none on one side, but only on the other, then what property there is, this way or that, does not fall out of the family."

"If Bessie is to be married, we might look elsewhere for one richer."

"Where will you look? Who among the neighbours is old enough or young enough? Some are over her age. You would not give her to Master Solomon Gibbs. Some be too young and hot-blooded to care for her, not very well favoured, and without much wealth."

Old Anthony stood still before the window, and looked out.

"Then," said Magdalen, "there's another side of the matter to be considered. What if Bessie should set her heart on some one of whom you would not approve?"

Old Anthony laughed mockingly. "Not much chance of that, I reckon."

"Do you reckon?" asked his sister, with some heat. "Yes, you men do make up your minds that we spinsters have no hearts,

go through no trials, because you do not see them. As our love is not proclaimed on the house-tops, you assume that it does not exist in the secret chambers of the heart. If you are forced to admit that there is such a thing in us, you suppose it may be killed with ridicule, as you put salt on weeds. As for your own headlong, turbulent passions, they brook no control, they are irresistible, but we poor women must smother our fires as if always illicit, like a chimney in a blaze that must be choked out with damp straw stuffed in. You men never consider us. You permit a pretty girl to love, and you consider her feelings somewhat—just somewhat; but it never occurs to your wise heads, but shallow thoughts, that the plain faces and the ordinary-favoured girls may have hearts as tender and susceptible as those who are regarded as beauties. Now, as to Bessie——"

"Well, what as to Bessie?" asked Anthony, roughly. He knew that his sister was lightly lifting the corner of a veil that covered her past, and he knew how that, by a little generosity on his part, he might have made it possible for her to marry.

"As to Bessie," resumed Magdalen, "I

can only speak what I suspect. I have thought for some time that she was fond of her cousin."

"What—of Luke?"

"Of Luke, certainly."

Old Anthony turned angrily on her, and said, "A pack of folly! He is her cousin."

"I said so. Does that prevent her liking him? Have you aught against that?"

"Everything. I will not hear of her marrying a pigeon-breasted, starveling curate. I will speak to her."

"If you meddle you will mar. Take a woman's advice, and say not a word."

"Then be silent on this matter."

"If you marry Tony to Julian," said his sister, "what are you going to do with Elizabeth? Fernando Crymes has Kilworthy for his life, so that the young people will, I doubt not, live with you; and Julian would no more let Bessie reside in the house with her than would your Margaret suffer me."

"She shall abide at Hall if I choose it."

"No, indeed. You may will it; but women's wishes, when they go contrary, can make a bad storm in the house, and

spoil it as a port of peace. You take my counsel and mate the twain at the same time —the one to Julian and the other to Fox."

"Pshaw!" said the old man, turning away from the window. "Because I was godfather to Fox, it does not follow that he wants to be my son."

Then the old man came over to the table that stood near his sister, seated himself, and began to trifle with a snuff-box upon it.

"I shall not part with Bess," he said, "till Tony is matched."

"Then let him be matched with speed," said Magdalen, sharply. "How know you but that, if you delay, Julian Crymes may turn her fancy elsewhere. She is a wayward hussy."

"Pshaw!" Where is there such a lad as my Tony? He is the chiefest of all the youths about. No one can compare with him. Are you mad to think of such a thing?"

"There is no reckoning on a maid's eyes: they do not see like ours. Moreover, there is no saying what freak might take your Tony, and he might set his mind on some one else."

"No fear of that," answered the Squire,

roughly. "He knows my will, and that is law to him."

"Indeed! Since when? I thought the cockerel's whimsies and vagaries set the law to the house; and that you, and Bess, and every one of the family danced to such tune as he whistled."

"I reckon he knows his own interests," said the old man, grimly. He was angered with his sister's opposition.

"None can trust to that in young men," answered his sister, "as you ought best to know, brother."

Old Anthony winced, and became purple at this allusion to his own marriage. He started up, struck the snuff-box across the table, then seated himself again, and said grimly: "I asked you, sister, if you could eat and digest a good wholesome dinner, and I gave it you; but, by Heaven, you have come here and fed me with unwholesome and unsavoury diet that I cannot digest, and that gives me a worry and heartburn. I wish you had never come."

CHAPTER VII.

IN THE HARE AND HOUNDS.

In the tavern with the sign of the Hare and Hounds, a fire of peat was burning on the hearth. A huge oak settle occupied the side of the fireplace opposite to the window, and beneath and before the window was a long table, the end of which admitted of being drawn out so as to make it serve as a shuffle-board for the use of such as liked to play at that game so popular in the reign of Elizabeth, illicit in the time of the Common wealth,and at the epoch of my story almost obsolete, except in stray corners remote from fashion.

The settle was of a construction then usual, now rarely met with, and therefore deserving a description as a domestic curio-

sity. The seat was on hinges, and could be raised, disclosing beneath it a cavity like a clothes chest; the settle back opened in compartments and revealed sides of bacon and hams that had been smoked, and there awaited cutting up. Above the heads of those who sat in the settle was a sort of projecting roof to cut off all down draught; but this also served as a cupboard for vinegar, salt, spices, and other groceries. The chest, that was also seat, to a mother with an infant, was of extraordinary service; when she was engaged at the fire, baking or cooking, she raised the lid or seat and buttoned it back, then she planted the babe in the box, where it lay warm and secure, close to her, without the chance of coming to harm. If the child were in the age of toddledum, then it ran up and down in the box with the little hands on the edge, saw its mother, crowed to her, watched her proceedings, and ran no risk of falling into the fire, or of pulling over and breaking the crockery. Altogether, the settle was a great institution, and the march of culture, instead of improving it, has abolished it. More is the pity.

The fireplace was of granite uncarved,

but rudely chamfered, very wide and very deep, so deep as to allow of a seat recessed in the wall at the side, in which a chilly old man might sit and toast his knees, protected from the down draught and falling soot by the arched roof of the recess. It used to be said of one of these great fireplaces, in which wood and peat were burned, that a necessary accompaniment was an old man and a pair of tongs, for the logs when burnt through in the midst fell apart, and required some one at hand to pick the ends up, and reverse them on the hearth, and to collect and repile the turfs when they fell down. At the fire-breast burnt, what was called a "spane," that is, a slip of deal steeped in resin, which lighted the housewife at her operations at the fire. But the "spane" emitted more smoke than light. Opposite to the ingle-nook was the "cloam" oven, that is, the earthenware oven let into the wall for baking.

In more ancient times ovens were constructed with enormous labour out of granite blocks, which were scooped out in the middle, but the disadvantage attendant on granite was that it became in time

resolved into sand by heat, and crumbled away like sugar.*

These were rapidly got rid of when the earthenware oven was introduced, and hardly a specimen remains. Not so, however, with the stone frying-pan, which is only just, and not altogether, superseded. Housewives contend that the iron pan is not so good at frying as the scooped out pan of stone, and that rashers of bacon done in the latter are incomparably superior to those burnt in iron. Thus, it will be seen that in the West we are only recently, in some particulars emerging from the Stone-Age, but it is with a leap over that of Bronze into the era of Iron.†

The walls of the "mug-house" of the Hare and Hounds were well white-washed and ornamented with a quantity of broadside ballads, the illustrations very generally

* Such a granite-oven was discovered in the author's own house in an old and long-abandoned chimney-back, in 1886. It was impossible to preserve it.

† Two such stone frying-pans are to be seen in the Museum at Launceston. The one was given by a gentleman from his kitchen, where it had been long in use, the other was found among the ruins of Trecarrel—probably coeval with the buildings, the middle of the sixteenth century.

bearing no intelligible relation to the letter-press.

A single rush-candle, burning on the table, served to light the room. The servant-wench was expected to act as snuffer, and she regularly at intervals of ten minutes left the work on which she was engaged, cooking, washing, drawing ale, and like the comet that sweeps up to and about the sun, and then dashes back into obscurity, so did she rush up to the candle, snuff the wick between forefinger and thumb, and plunge back to the work on which she was engaged, at the fire, in the back-kitchen, or in the cellar.

At the fire and about the table were seated Anthony Cleverdon, Fox Crymes, the host of the Hare and Hounds, Mr. Solomon Gibbs, also a quaint old grey-haired man in sorry garb, and a couple of miners from the moor.

At the time of the tale, and, indeed for a century after, it was customary for men of all classes to meet at the alehouse, parson and Squire, surgeon, farmer, and peasant, comrades all in merry-making—and at that period there was no social-democracy, no class-hatreds—how could

there be, when all classes met, and gossiped, and smoked, and boozed together? No good thing comes without bringing a shadow after it. Perhaps it is well that parson and Squire do not now go to the tavern to take pipe and glass with yeoman and ploughboy, but—the misfortune is that there has come class-alienation, along with this social amelioration of the better sort.

Mr. Solomon Gibbs was at the table. He had occupied the corner of the settle all the afternoon, searching for his niece in the bottom of his tankard, but after awhile, as evening settled in, he declared he felt the heat too greatly by the fire, and then withdrew to the table. In fact, when occupying the settle, his can of ale had stood on a three-legged stool between his feet, and whenever he lusted after a drink he was obliged to stoop to take it up. As the ale got into his head, he found that this stooping produced a fulness of the veins that made him giddy, and he had fallen forward once on his hands, and upset the stool and his ale. Then he deemed it advisable to retire to the table, but as men never give direct and true reasons for

their proceedings, he explained to those who were present that——

"There was thunder in the air, and when their was, he was liable to fits of giddiness; moreover, the heat of the fire was insufferable."

His wig was very much awry; underneath it was a strong stubbly growth, for Mr. Gibbs had not had his head shaved for a fortnight. His mulberry coat was much stained with ale, and the elbows were glossy.

The old man in the threadbare coat occupied a chair near the table, and he stood up, turned his eyes to the ceiling, extended his arms rigidly before him, planted his legs apart, and began to sing a song at that time exceedingly popular, "The Catholic Cause;" his voice ranging through an extensive scale, from bass to falsetto.

Oh, the Catholic Cause! now assist me, sweet Muse,
How earnestly I do desire thee!
Faith I will not go pray to St. Bridget to-day,
But only to thee to inspire me.

The singer was interrupted by a groan from all in the room, and a shout from Mr.

Solomon Gibbs, "Calvinist Géneva and Hollands for me! Catholic French Claret is thin—deuced thin liquor!"

Then the Church shall bear sway, the State shall obey,
  Which in England will be a new wonder!
Commons, Nobles, and Kings, and Temporal things
  Shall submit, and shall truckle under!

The miners jumped to their feet, and began to swear that they'd rather be crushed in their adits, than live to see that day.

"Things are coming fair on towards it, sure as the clouds have been rolling up, and portending a thunderstorm," said the host.

"Ah!" growled Solomon; "give the Devil his due. Old Noll, who didn't sit by right Divine, knew how to make Britain free and honoured."

"No Dutch in the Medway, then! No burning of Spithead, and His Majesty's fleet under His Majesty's nose," said the old singer.

"'Tis a pity," said one of the men present, "that there were not a few more drowned on the Lemon and Ore than those who were. Nay, rather, that certain who escaped should not have sunk, and such as

drowned should not have escaped." This had reference to a sandbank near Yarmouth, on which the frigate bearing the Duke of York had struck, when about a hundred and thirty persons were drowned.

"Here!" called Sol Gibbs. "Here's bad luck to Lemon and Ore for doing the work so foully!" and he put his jug of ale to his lips.

"Lemon and Ore," said each who drank, "better luck next time." "Folks do say," put in the landlord, "that the King, God bless him, was really married to Lucy Walters. If that be so, why then the Duke of Monmouth should be king after him." Then he shook his head, and added, "But, Lord! I know nought about such matters."

"Here's a health to the Protestant Duke!" said the miners, and looked about them. "Now, my masters! Won'ty all drink to the Protestant Duke?"

"To be sure I will—drink to any one," said Solomon Gibbs.

"Why should he not have married her?" asked the singer. "Didn't the Duke of York marry Mistress Ann Hyde? And Lucy Walters was a gentlewoman every whit as

much. When the Duke of Monmouth was born, then His Majesty was Prince Charles, in France, with small chance of coming to his own again; for Old Noll was then in full flower, and making the earth quake at the name of England."

"When the Duke of Savoy was persecuting the Protestants, did not Old Noll hold up his finger, and at the sight of his nail the Duke stayed his hands," said Anthony Cleverdon. "By the Lord! If it had been in my time, I would have drawn the sword for them."

"When all the giants are dead, every Tom Thumb boasts he would have been a Jack of Cornwall," sneered Fox Crymes.

"What is that you say?" asked Anthony, hotly.

"I was merely saying that it ill becomes a man of spirit to boast of what he would have done had things been other than they are."

"Do you mean to hint that I am a coward?"

"I hinted nothing of the sort. I made a general observation. If the time should come when your sword would be wanted to sustain the Protestant cause, I make no

doubt that you will be ready to prop it up—on the point."

"No quarrels here," shouted Solomon Gibbs; then he sang:—

> Let nothing but harmony reign in your breast,
> Let comrade with comrade be ever at rest.
> We'll toss off our bumper, together we'll troll,
> Give me the punch-ladle—I'll fathom the bowl.

Then he called to the united assembly, "What say you all—shall we have a punch bowl? *Nem. con.* Carried. That is it which lacked to establish sweetest concord. Landlord! Bring us the needful, and we'll brew.

> From France cometh brandy, Jamaica gives rum,
> Sweet oranges, lemons from Portugal come.
> Of ale and good cyder we'll also take toll,
> Give me the punch-ladle—I'll fathom the bowl.

The host called to his wife to produce the requisite ingredients, and went in quest of the ladle, which he kept upstairs, as it had a silver piece of Charles I. let into it.

"I ax," said one of the miners, throwing out his arm as if proclaiming defiance, "how it came about that London was burnt?

Warn't them Poperies seen a doing of it—a firing it in several places?"

"And Sir Edmondbury Godfrey—weren't he cruelly and bloodily murdered by 'em?" asked the second.

"Ay! and whose doing is it that that worthy gentleman, my Lord Russell, has been done to death? That every one knows. 'Tis said the Earl of Bedford offered a hundred thousand pounds to save his life; but the Catholic Duke would not hear of his being spared. And the Duke of York will be King after his present Gracious Majesty. By heaven! I would draw sword for the Protestant Duke and swear to his legitimacy."

"I'll tell you what it is," said Fox Crymes, "if this sort of talk is going on here, I'm off and away. If you are not speaking treason, you go pretty nigh to it, too nigh for safety, and I'll be off."

"There are no informers and spies here," said the yeoman.

"I reckon us be all true Protestants and loyal to the Crown and Constitution. The Constitution! God bless it!"

"You can't go, Fox," said Anthony, "for here comes the storm we have been expect-

ing." He spoke as a flash illuminated the room, and was followed by a boom of near thunder, then down came the rain like the fall of a waterspout on the roof.

Our brothers lie drowned in the depths of the sea,
Cold stones for their pillows, what matters to me?

Mr. Solomon Gibbs was erect, supporting himself on the table by his left hand, whilst he mixed the bowl of punch and stirred it, and sang in snatches—

We'll drink to their healths and repose to each soul,
Give me the punch ladle—I'll fathom the bowl.

"Now then, landlord! Where's the lemons? Bless my soul, you're not going to make us drink unlemoned punch? As well give us a king without a crown or a parson without a gown."

Your wives they may fluster as much as they please—
Haven't got one, I'm thankful—a sister don't count—
Let 'em scold, let 'em grumble, we'll sit at our ease
In the ends of our pipes we'll apply a hot coal
Give me the punch-ladle—I'll fathom the bowl.

—So! the lemons at last? Where's a silver knife to cut them with? Bless my

soul! How it rains. I thank Providence the water is without, and the spirit is within."

"This rain will dowse the fires on the moor," said the yeoman.

"And would have washed your Tory zeal out of you, Fox," laughed Anthony, "had you gone out in it just now, shocked at our Whiggery."

"Oh! you," sneered Fox, "you took good care to say nothing. You were wise not to come within seeing distance with a pair of perspective glasses of Tyburn gallows, where men have been hung, disembowelled, and drawn for less offence than some of the words let drop to-night."

"Now—no more of this," shouted Mr. Solomon Gibbs, "I am president here. Where the punch-bowl is, there is a president, and I wave my sceptre, this ladle, and enforce abstention from politics, and all such scurvy subjects. You began it Taverner, with your damnable ballad of the Catholic cause, and you shall be served last. Comrades! 'To the King, God bless him!'"

"And the Protestant cause!" shouted Taverner.

"Ay, ay, which His Majesty swore to maintain," said the miners.

"Bar politics!" cried Mr. Gibbs, "or, curse it, I'll throw the punch out of the door. I will, I swear I will. Taverner, give us something cheerful — something with no politics in it to set us all by the ears."

"Shall I give you something suitable to the evening, Mr. Gibbs?"

"Certainly—tune up. I wish I had my viol with me to give a few chords; but I set out to look for my niece who had strayed, and I forgot to take my viol with me."

The grey-haired ballad-singer stood up, cleared his throat, and with the utmost gravity sang, throwing marvellous twirls and accidentals into the tune, the following song:—

My Lady hath a sable coach
  And horses, two and four,
My Lady hath a gaunt bloodhound
  That runneth on before.
My Lady's coach hath nodding plumes,
  The coachman has no head.
My Lady's face is ashen white,
  As one that long is dead.

"Now, pray step in," my Lady saith,
  "Now, pray step in, and ride!"

"I thank thee, I had rather walk,
  Than gather to thy side."
The wheels go round without a sound
  Of tramp or turn of wheels,
As a cloud at night, in the pale moonlight,
  Onward the carriage steals.

"Now, pray step in," my Lady saith,
  "Now, prithee, come to me,"
She takes the baby from the crib,
  She sets it on her knee.
    The wheels go round, etc.

"Now, pray step in," my Lady saith,
  "Now, pray step in, and ride,"
Then deadly pale, in wedding veil,
  She takes to her the bride.
    The wheels go round, etc.

"Now, pray step in," my Lady saith,
  "There's room I wot for you."
She waved her hand, the coach did stand,
  The Squire within she drew.
    The wheels go round, etc.

"Now, pray step in, my Lady saith,
  "Why should'st thou trudge afoot?"
She took the gaffer in by her,
  His crutches in the boot.
    The wheels go round, etc.

I'd rather walk a hundred miles,
  And run by night and day,
Than have that carriage halt for me,
  And hear my Lady say—

"Now, pray step in, and make no din,
I prithee come and ride.
There's room, I trow, by me for you,
And all the world beside." *

* Published with the traditional melody in "Songs of the West, Traditional Songs and Ballads of the West of England," by S. Baring-Gould and H. Fleetwood Sheppard. (Methuen, Bury Street, London, 1889.)

CHAPTER VIII.

ST. MARK'S EVE.

The ballad of the "Lady's Coach," sung to a weird air in an ancient mode, such as was becoming no more usual for composers to write in, and already beginning to sound strange and incomplete to the ear, at once changed the tenor of the thoughts of those in the tavern, and diverted their conversation away from politics into a new channel. The wind had risen, and was raging round the house, driving the rain in splashes against the casement; and puffing the smoke down the chimney into the room.

"You came back from the moor along the Lyke-Way, did you?" asked the farmer of Anthony.

"Yes; it is many miles the shortest, and there was plenty of light."

"I wouldn't travel it at night for many crowns," said the yeoman.

"Why not!" asked one of the miners. "What is there to fear on the moor? If there be spirits, they hurt no one."

"I should like others to risk it before me," said the yeoman.

"Anthony took good care not to ride it alone," muttered Fox, with a side glance at young Cleverdon.

"You forced yourself on me," answered Anthony, sharply.

"Of course you wanted to be quite alone —I understand," sneered Fox.

"You can comprehend, I hope, that your company is no advantage to be greatly desired on the Lyke-Way or elsewhere," retorted Anthony, angrily. "Possibly enough it was distasteful to others beside myself."

"And your society was infinitely preferable. I make no question as to that," scoffed Fox.

"Now, no quarrels here. We have banished politics. Must we banish every other topic that arises?" asked Solomon Gibbs. "What is this that makes you bicker now?"

"Oh, nothing!" said Crymes. "Anthony Cleverdon and I were discussing the Lyke-Way, and whether either of us cared to go along it at night. I shrink from it, just as does Farmer Cudlip. Nor does Cleverdon seem more disposed to walk it."

"I am not disposed to travel over it in rain and wind, in the midst of a thunder-storm. I would go along it any other night when moon and stars show, to allow of a man finding his road."

"I'll tell you what," said the yeoman; "there's worse places than the Lyke-Way on such a night as this."

"Where is that?"

"Do you know what night it be?"

"A very foul one."

"Ay, no doubt about that! after a fair day. But this is St. Mark's Eve, and I'll tell you what befel my grandfather on this night some years agone. 'Twas in Peter Tavy, too—it came about he'd been to the buryin' of his uncle's mother's sister's aunt, and, as he said hisself, never enjoyed hisself more at a buryin'. There was plenty o' saffron cake and cyder, and some bottles of real old Jamaica rum, mellow—Lor' bless you—soft and mellow as a cat's paw. He lived, did

my grandfather, at Horndon, and it were a night much such as this. My granfer had rather a deal stayed wi' the corpse, but he was a mighty strict and scrupulous old man, and he knowed that his wife—my grandmother as was—would expect him home about—well, I can't say for sartain, but, anyhow, some hours afore daybreak. Us poor fellers in this world o' misery and trial can't a'ways have what we desires, so my grandfer had to sacrifice hisself on the altar of dooty, and not bide with the corpse and the Jamaica rum, not to mention the saffron cake. 'Tes surprising, gentlemen," said Farmer Cudlip, looking round at Cleverdon, Crymes, and Solomon Gibbs, " 'tes surprising now, when you come to reckon up, how soon one comes to the end o' eating cake, and yet, in Jamaica rum, and punch—I thanky' kindly, Mr. Gibbs, to fill me the glass. Thanky', sir!—As I was saying, in drink one's capacity is, I should say, boundless as the rolling ocean. Ain't it now, Mr. Gibbs?"

"Ah! Solomon the Wise never said a truer word," answered Solomon the Foolish.

" 'Tes curious, when you come to consider now," said the farmer; " for meat and drink

both goes the same way and into the same receptacle ; yet how soon one is grounded on cake, but can float, and float—I thank you, Mr. Gibbs, my glass is empty—float for ever in liquor."

"We should like to hear what your grandfather did," said Cleverdon, laughing.

"What he did? Why he sot down," said Cudlip. "After leaving the house of tears and bereavement, he was going home, and was very tired, his legs began to give way under him. And as he came along by the wall o' Peter Tavy Church, sez he to hisself, 'Why dash me if it bain't St. Mark's Eve, and many a time have I heard tell that they as wait on that eve in the church porch is sure to see go by in at the door all they that is sure to die in the rest o' the year.' Well, gentlemen, my grandfer, he knewed he was a bit late, and thought his wife—my grandmother, wouldn't take it over kindly, so he thinks if he could bring her a bit of rare news, she'd mebbe forgive him. And, gentlemen, what more rare news could he bring than a tale of who was doomed to die within the year? So he went in at the churchyard-gate, and straight—that is to say as straight as his legs, which weren't quite

equal, could take him—to the porch, and there, on the side away from the wind, he sot hisself down."

"I wouldn't have done it," said one of the miners, nudging his fellow; "would thou, Tummas?"

"Not I," responded his comrade. "If it had been the Lyke-Way, that's different. I'd walk that any night. But to go under a roof, in the churchyard—it were tempting o' Providence."

"Go on with your story," said Solomon Gibbs. "Those that interrupt lose a turn of filling from the bowl."

"Well then," continued Cudlip, "my grandfather was seated for some time in the porch, and uncommon dark it was, for there are a plenty of trees in the churchyard, and the night was dirty, and the sky covered with clouds. How long he sat there, I cannot tell, but long enough to get uneasy, not that he was afraid, bless your souls, of what he might see, but uneasy at being there so long, and seeing nothing, so that he must go home to my grandmother without a word o' explanation or information that might pacify her, should she be inclined to be troublesome. Just as he was

about to get up, in a mighty bad temper, and go home, cursing the fools who had got up the tale of St. Mark's Eve, why looking along the avenue in the yard, what should he see but some curious long white things, like monstrous worms, crawling and tumbling, and making for the church porch. You will understand, gentlemen, that my grandfather thought he would do better to wait where he was, partly, because he did not wish to pass these worm-like creatures, but, chiefly, that he might have something to report to his missus, to make her placable and agreeable."

"But what were they?" asked Anthony Cleverdon.

"I'll tell you, Master Anthony. They was human arms, from the shoulder, walking of themselves; first they laid along from shoulder to elbow, then the hand from elbow forward lifted itself and looked about, and then came down flat on the palm, and lifted all the hinder part from the elbow joint till it stood upright, and then turned a somersault; a coorious sort of proceeding, I take it."

"Very," said Crymes, with a sneer.

"There was about nine of 'em coming along,

some fast as if racing each other, some slow, but creeping on, and overtaking the others that was going too fast, and fell over on the elbow joint, when up went hand and shoulder kicking in the air like a beetle on his back. My grandfather felt that now sartainly he'd have news to tell his old woman. Presently a lot of the arms was about the step to the church porch, shy like, not knowing whether to come in or no—some standing up on the shoulder and poking the hands in, some curlin' of themselves up on the step, as a-going to sleep, and some staggering about anyways. At last one of the boldest of them made a jump, and came down on my grandfather's knee, and sat there, with the shoulder part on his knee, like as a limpet fastens on a rock, or the end of a barnacle on a log of wood, and there it sat and curled itself about, and turned the hand just as if it saw out of the nails—which was very white, and served as eyes. It was curious, my grandfather said, to see the fingers curling one over the other, just as a fly preens its wings. My granfer couldn't make it out at first, till at last he saw it was pulling and picking at a gold ring on the last finger but one. It was a very

broad ring—and directly my granfer knowed it, and said, 'Why, blazes!' said he, 'that's Mistress Cake's wedding ring!' And no sooner had he said that, than the arm jumped off his knee and went on to the church door, and he saw it no more. Now it is a fact, gentlemen, that Mistress Cake, of Wringworthy, died a month later of falling sickness. But he had not a moment for consideration, as in came another arm, that stood at his foot bowing to him with the hand, and then patting him on the shin. This arm didn't like to seem to make so bold as to come up and sit on his knee, so my grandfer stooped and looked at it. It stood up on the shoulder, and it had very strong muscles; but rather stiff, they seemed, wi' age, for they cracked like when the arm bent itself about, which it did in a slow and clumsy fashion. 'Twas a brown arm, too, and not white, like Madam Cake's; and the hand was big, and broad, and hairy, and it turned itself over and showed the palm; and then it held up one finger after another, which was all covered with warts. Then my grandfer said, 'Lor' bless and deliver! but this be the hand of Ploughman Gale!' And, sure enough, I reckon it was.

It seemed quite satisfied, and folded itself up, and made a spring like a cricket—went out of sight to the church door."

"I should like to know how your grandfather saw all this," said Anthony Cleverdon, "if it was, as you say, a dark night, and it was in the church porch?"

"No interfering!" exclaimed Mr. Gibbs. "You've forfeited. Here's your glass, Master Cudlip. Go on."

"There's not much more to be said," continued the yeoman. "One or two more arms came on, and grandfer said there was a sight o' difference in their ways: some was pushing like, and forward; and others rayther hung back, and seemed to consider small bones of themselves. Now it was a fact that all those he saw and named belonged to folks as died within the year, and in the very order in which they came on and presented themselves before him. What puzzled him most to name was two baby-arms—purty little things they was—and he had to count over all the young children in the parish before he could tell which they was. At last, up came a long, lean, old, dry arm, tossing its hand in a short, quick, touchy fashion, and went up

on grandfer's knee without as much as a 'By your leave.' And there it sat, and poked its hand about, wi' all the fingers joined together like a pointed serpent's head. It moved in a queer, irritable, jerky manner that was familiar, somehow, to my grandfather. After a bit he put his head down to look at the elbow, where he fancied he saw a mole, when—crack!—the hand hit him on his cheek such a blow, that he tumbled over, and lay sprawling on the pavement; and he knew, by the feel of the hand as it caught him, that it was—my grandmother's. When he had picked himself up, he saw nothing more, so he went home. You may be very sure of two things, gentlemen—[Thank you, Mr. Gibbs, I'll trouble you to fill my glass. Talking has made me terrible dry]—he never told his missus that Madam Cake's arm had sat on his knee, nor that he had seen and recognized her *own* arm and hand."

"I wouldn't go on this night to the church porch, not for a king's crown," said one of the miners. "Did not your grandfather suffer for his visit?"

"Well," answered the yeoman, "I reckon he did ever after feel a sort o' cramp in his

knees—particularly in wet weather, where the arms had sat—but what was that to the relief? My grandmother died that same year."

"I wouldn't go there for any relief you might name," said the miner again, who was greatly impressed by the story. "I've heard the pixies hammering down in the mines, but I think naught of them. As for the Lyke-Way, what goes over that is but shadows."

"Some folks are afraid of shadows," said Fox, "and don't think themselves safe unless they have at least a woman with them for protection."

"You are again levelling at me," exclaimed Anthony Cleverdon. "I have no fear either of shadows or substances. If you choose to come out and try with me, you will see that I am not afraid of your arm, and that I can chastise your tongue."

"Oh! my arm!" laughed Crymes. "I never supposed for a moment you dreaded that. But it is the arms without bodies moving like worms in the churchyard at Peter Tavy on this St. Mark's Eve you are more likely to dread."

"I am not afraid of them," retorted Cleverdon.

"So you say; but I do not think you seem inclined to show you are not."

"Do you dare me to it?"

"I don't care whether you go or not. If you do, who is to stand surety for you that you go where I say—to the churchyard of Peter Tavy?"

"One of you can come and see."

"There!" laughed Fox, "crying off already! Afraid to go alone, and appealing for company."

"By heaven, this is too bad," cried Anthony, and started to his feet.

"Don't go," shouted Mr. Solomon Gibbs. "It's folly, and break up of good company."

"There's good company with Fox Crymes girding at me at every minute. But, by heaven, I will not be jeered at as a coward. Fox has dared me to go to Peter Tavy churchyard, and go I will—alone, moreover."

"No such thing," said the host; "it is too bad a night. Stay here and help finish this brew; we'll have another bowl, if Mr. Solomon approves—and Mr. Cudlip."

"I will go," said Anthony, thoroughly roused, and rendered doubly excitable by the punch he had been drinking.

"You have done wrong to spur him," said Gibbs, addressing Crymes.

"Faith! I am a sceptic," said Fox. "I disbelieve altogether in the walking arms, and I shall be glad to learn from a credible witness whether the same be a mere fiction and fancy, or have any truth in it. Master Cudlip's grandfather lived a long time ago."

"I do not believe in it either," said Cleverdon; "but although I did I would not now be deterred. Fox casts his gibes at me, and I will show him that I have metal enough to make such a trifling venture as this."

He threw on his cloak, grasped his long walking-stick, and went out into the storm. A furious gale was sweeping about the little hamlet of Cudlip Town, where stood the tavern. It was not possible to determine from which quarter the wind came, it so eddied about the inn and the open space before it. Anthony stood against the wall outside for a moment or two till his eyes accustomed themselves somewhat to the dark. Every few moments the glare of lightning in the sky illumined the rocky ridges of White Tor and Smeardun, under which Cudlip Town lay, and the twisted

thorns and oaks among blocks of granite that strewed the slopes before the three or four old farmhouses that were clustered about the inn.

Then Anthony, having satisfied himself as to his direction, set down his head against the wind, and strode forward, with his staff feeling the way. On his right, below in this valley, roared the Tavy, but the song of the water was mixed up with that of the wind so inextricably that Anthony, had he tried it, could not have distinguished the roar of one from that of the other. The lane was between stone walls and hedges of half stone and half earth, in summer adorned with magnificent foxgloves. For a while the rain slackened, and where the walls were high Anthony had some shelter against the wind. S. Peter Tavy Church lay outside the village, and he would reach it without passing another house.

The principal fury of the storm seemed to be concentrated over White Tor, a lofty peak of trap rock fortified in prehistoric times, and with beacons and cairns of angular fragments piled up within the enclosure. In one place a huge fang of black rock stood upright, and was split by

lightning, with a block of basalt fallen into the cleft, where it swung between the rocks. Over the cairns and embankments the thunder-cloud flamed white, and threw out dazzling fire-bolts. Anthony stood one moment, looking up at the Tor; it was as though the spirits of the air were playing at tossball there with thunder-bolts. Then he again pushed forward. The wind, the cold—after the warmth of the tavern and the spirits he had drunk—confused his brain, and though he was not intoxicated, yet he was not judge of his actions. At the next explosion of the electric fluid he saw before him the granite tower of the church, and the trees in the churchyard bare of leaves.

Those in the tavern became grave and silent for a moment after Anthony left.

"It is a folly," said one of the miners; "it is tempting heaven."

"I don't care whether he sees aught or not," said Cudlip; "my grandfather's story is true. It don't follow because Anthony Cleverdon comes back having seen nothing that my grandfather told an untruth. Who can tell? perhaps nobody in the parish will die this year. If there is to be no burials, then no arms will be walking."

"I hope he's not gone the wrong road and tumbled into the river," said Solomon Gibbs.

"I'll tell you what he will do," said Fox. "He will let us sit expecting his return all night, and he will quietly take himself off to Hall, and laugh at us for our folly to-morrow."

"Not he," said the innkeeper; "that's not the way with Master Cleverdon. *You* might have done that, and we should not ha' been surprised."

"I would have done it, most assuredly. If Tony does not, then he is more of a fool than I take him to be. He loves a bit of brag as much as another, and with brag he went forth."

"There is no brag in him," said Taverner, the ballad-singer. "Every one knows what Anthony Cleverdon is; if he says he will do a thing, he will do it. If we wait long enough, he will return from the churchyard."

"Or say he has been there."

"If he says it, we will believe him—all but you, Mr. Crymes, who believe in nobody and nothing."

"Now, we have had threats of quarrel already more than once; I must stop this,"

said Solomon Gibbs. "Storm outside is sufficient. Let us have calm within over the sea of punch."

"Oh!" said Fox, contemptuously, "I don't quarrel with old Taverner; no man draws save against his equal."

"Punch! more punch!" shouted Gibbs. "Landlord, we are come to the gravel. And, Taverner! give us a song, but not one so dismal as 'My Lady's Coach.' That set us about speaking of St. Mark's Eve, and sent Cleverdon on this crazy adventure."

"What shall I sing?" asked the songman, but he did not wait for an answer. He stood up and began :—

Oh! the trees they are so high,
  And the leaves they are so green!
The day is past and gone, sweet love,
  That you and I have seen.
    It is cold winter's night,
      You and I must bide alone,
    Whilst my pretty lad is young,
      And is growing.

The door was burst open, and Anthony entered, with the water pouring off him. He was blinded with the rain that had beat in his face, as he came towards Cudlip's

Town. In his arms he bore something like a log.

"There!" said he, and cast this object on the table, where it struck and shattered the porcelain punchbowl, sending its last contents over the table and the floor.

"There!" shouted Anthony, "will you now believe I have been in the churchyard?"

"By the Lord!" shouted Solomon Gibbs, "this is past a joke. This is a mortal insult."

That which Anthony had cast on the table was one of the oak posts which marked the head of a grave, square, with a sort of nick and knob on the top:—such a post as was put up by those who could not afford granite tombstones.

"It is an insult! It is an outrage!" roared Gibbs, "look there!" He pointed to the inscription on the post—it ran thus:—

RICHARD MALVINE,
OF WILLSWORTHY, GENT.

CHAPTER IX.

WILLSWORTHY.

The night of storm was succeeded by a fresh and sparkling morning. The rain hung on every bush, twinkling in prismatic colours. There still rose smoke from the moor, but the wind had shifted, and it now carried the combined steam and smoke away to the east. The surface of Dartmoor was black, as though bruised all over its skin of fine turf. Hardly any gorse bushes were left, and the fire had for more than one year robbed the moor of the glory of golden blossom that crowned it in May, and of the mantle of crimson heath wherewith it was enfolded in July.

Luke Cleverdon, Curate of Peter Tavy, walked slowly up the hill from the bridge over the brawling River Tavy, towards

Willsworthy. He was a tall, spare young man, with large soft brown eyes, and a pale face. His life had not been particularly happy. His parents had died when he was young, and old Cleverdon, of Hall, had taken charge of the boy in a grumblingly, ungracious fashion, resenting the conduct of his brother in dying, and encumbering him with the care of a delicate child. Luke was older than young Anthony, and possibly for a while old Anthony may have thought that, in the event of his wife giving him no son, Hall and his accumulations would devolve on this frail, white-faced, and timid lad. The boy proved to be fond of books, and wholly unsuited for farm life. Consequently, he was sent to school, and then to College, and had been ordained by the Bishop of Exeter to the Curacy of Tavy St. Peter, or Peter-Tavy, as it was usually called. His uncle had never shown him affection, his young cousin, Anthony, had been in everything and every way preferred before him, and had been suffered to put him aside and tyrannize over him at his will. Only in Bessie had he found a friend, though hardly an associate, for Bessie's interests were other than those of

the studious, thoughtful boy. She was a true Martha, caring for all that pertained to the good conduct of the house, and Luke had the dreamy idealism of Mary. The boy had suffered from contraction of the chest, but had grown out of his extreme delicacy in the fresh air of the country, and living on the abundant and wholesome food provided in a farm. His great passion was for the past. He had so little to charm him in the present, and no pursuit unfolding before him in the future, that he had been thrown as a lad to live in the past, to make the episodes of history his hunting fields. Fortunately for him, Dartmoor was strewn with prehistoric antiquities; upright stones ranged in avenues, in some instances extending for miles, with mysterious circles of unhewn blocks, and with cairns and kistvaens, or stone coffins constructed of rude slabs of granite. Among these he wandered, imagining strange things, peopling the solitude, and dreaming of the Druids who, he supposed, had solemnized their ritual in these rude temples.

Old Cleverdon was angered with the pursuits of his nephew. He utterly despised any pursuit which did not lead to money,

and archæology was one which might, and often did, prove expensive, but was not remunerative from a pecuniary point of view. As soon as ever Luke was ordained and established in a curacy, the old man considered that his obligation towards him had ceased, and he left the poor young man to sustain himself on the miserable salary that was paid him by his non-resident Rector. But Luke's requirements were small, and his only grief at the smallness of his stipend was that it obliged him to forego the purchase of books.

He was on his way to Willsworthy, four miles from the parish church, at the extreme end of the parish, to pay a pastoral visit to Mistress Malvine, who was an invalid. Before reaching the house he came to a ruined chapel, that had not been used since the Reformation, and there he suddenly lighted upon Urith.

His pale face flushed slightly. She was seated on a mass of fallen wall, with her hands in her lap, occupied with her thoughts. To her surprise, on her return late on the preceding night, before the breaking of the storm, her mother had not followed her accustomed practice of covering her with

reproaches; and this had somewhat disconcerted Urith. Mrs. Malvine was a woman of not much intelligence, very self-centred, and occupied with her ailments. She had a knack of finding fault with every one, of seeing the demerits of all with whom she had to do; and she was not slow in expressing what she thought. Nor had she the tact to say what she thought and felt, and have done with it, she went on nagging, aggravating, exaggerating, and raking up petty wrongs or errors of judgment into mountains of misdemeanour, so that when at one moment she reproved such as had acted wrongly, she invariably in the next reversed positions, for she rebuked with such extravagance, and enlarged on the fault with such exaggeration as to move the innate sense of proportion and equity in the soul of the condemned, and to rouse the consciousness of injustice in the accused.

Such a scene had taken place the previous day, when her mother, aided by the blundering Uncle Solomon, had driven Urith into one of her fits of passion, in which she had run away. When Mistress Malvine discovered what she had done—that she had actually pressed her child beyond endurance,

and that the girl had run to the wilderness, where she could no more be traced, when the day and evening passed without her return, the sick woman became seriously alarmed, and faintly conscious that she had transgressed due bounds in the reprimand administered to Urith for rejecting the suit of Anthony Crymes. Consequently, when finally the girl did reappear, her mother controlled herself, and contented herself with inquiring where she had been.

Luke Cleverdon knew Urith better than did his cousins; in his rambles on the moor, as a boy, he had often come this way, and had frequently had Urith as his companion. The friendship begun in childhood continued between them now that he was curate in charge of souls, and she was growing into full bloom of girlhood.

He now halted, leaning both his hands on his stick, and spoke to her, and asked after her mother.

Urith rose to accompany him to the house. "She is worse; I fear I have caused her trouble and distress of mind. I ran away from home yesterday, and might have been lost on the moor, had not"—she hesitated,

her cheek assumed a darker tinge, and she said—"had not I fortunately been guided aright to reach home."

"That is well," said Luke. "We are all liable thus to stray, and well for us when we find a sure guide, and follow him."

For a young man he was gaunt. He was dressed in scrupulously correct clerical costume, a cassock and knee-breeches, white bands, and a three-cornered hat.

Urith spoke about the fire on the moor, the bewilderment caused by the smoke, and then of the storm during the night. He stood listening to her and looking at her; it seemed to him that he had not before properly appreciated her beauty. He had wondered at her strange temper—now frank, then sullen and reserved; he did not know the reason why this was now for the first time revealed to him—it was because in the night a change had taken place in the girl, for the first time she had felt the breath of that spirit of love which like magic wakes up the sleeping charms of soul and face, gives them expression and significance. Not, however, now for the first time did the thought cross his mind that, of all women in the world, she was the only one he could

and did love. He had long loved her, loved her deeply, but hopelessly, and had fought many a hard battle with himself to conquer a passion which his judgment told him must be subdued. He knew the girl—wild, sullen, undisciplined—the last to mould into the proper mate for a village pastor. Moreover, what was he but a poor curate, without interest with patrons, without means of his own, likely, as far as he could judge, to live and die a curate? He knew not only that Urith was not calculated to make a pastor's wife, but he knew also that hers was not a character that could consort with his. He was studious, meek, yet firm in his principles; she was hardly tame, of ungovernable temper, and a creature of impulse. No, they could not be happy together even were circumstances to allow of his marrying. He had said all this to himself a thousand times, yet he could not conquer his passion. He held it in control, and Urith, least of all, had a notion of its existence. She exercised on him that magic that is exercised on one character by another the reverse at every point. The calm, self-ruled, in-wrapped nature of Luke looked out at the turbulence or the morose-

ness of the wild girl with admiration mingled with fear. It exercised over him an inexplicable but overpowering spell. He knew she was not for him, and yet that she should ever belong to another was a thought that he could not bear to entertain. He walked at her side to the house listening to her, but hardly knowing what she said. The glamour of her presence was on him, and he walked as in a cloud of light, that dazzled his eyes and confused his mind.

Willsworthy was a very small and quaint old manor house—so small that a modern farmer would despise it. It consisted of a hall and a couple of sitting-rooms and kitchen on the ground floor, with a projecting porch with pavise over it. The windows looked into the little court, that was entered through old granite gates, capped with balls, and was backed by a cluster of bold sycamores and beech, in which was a large rookery.

Mrs. Malvine was in the hall. She had been brought down. She was unable to walk, and she sat in her arm-chair by the hearth. The narrow mullioned lights did not afford much prospect; and what they did reveal was only the courtyard and

stables that fronted the entrance to the house. To the back of the house was, indeed, a walled garden; but it was void of flowers, and suffered from the neglect which allowed everything about Willsworthy to sink into disrepair and barrenness. It grew a few pot-herbs, half-choked by weeds. There was no gardener kept; but a labourer, when he could be spared off the farm, did something in a desultory fashion to the garden—always too late to be of use to it.

"Peace be to this house!" said Luke, and passed in at the door.

He found that, for all his good wish, nothing at the moment was farther removed from Willsworthy than peace. Solomon Gibbs had slept long and heavily after his carouse, and had but just come down the stairs, and had just acted the inconsiderate part of telling his sister of the outrage committed by Anthony Cleverdon on her husband's grave. The poor widow was in an hysterical condition of effervescent wrath and lamentation.

The story was repeated, when Luke and Urith appeared, in a broken, incoherent fashion—the widow telling what she knew,

with additions of her own, Solomon throwing in corrections.

Urith turned chill in all her veins. Her heart stood still, and she stood looking at her uncle with stony eyes. Anthony Cleverdon, who had behaved to her with such kindness—Anthony, who had held her in his arms, had carried her through the fire, who had looked into her face with such warmth in his eyes—he thus insult her father's name and her family! It was impossible, incredible.

Luke paced the little hall with his arms folded behind his back. He had heard nothing of this at Peter Tavy when he left it. He hoped there was some mistake—some exaggeration. What could have been Anthony's object? Mr. Solomon Gibbs's account was certainly sufficiently involved and obscure to allow of the suspicion that there was exaggeration, for Mr. Solomon's recollection of the events was clouded by the punch imbibed overnight. But the fact that the headpiece of the grave had been brought to the tavern by his cousin could not be got over. Luke's heart was filled with commiseration for the distress of the widow, and pain for Urith, and with bitter-

ness against Anthony. He had nothing but platitudes to say—nothing that could pacify the excited woman, who went from one convulsion into another.

Suddenly the door was thrust open, and in, without a knock, without permission, came Anthony himself—the first time he had crossed that threshold.

Urith's arms fell to her side, and her fists became clenched. How dare he appear before them, after having committed such an offence? Mistress Malvine held up her hands before her face to hide the sight of him from her eyes.

"I have come," said Anthony—"I have come because of that bit of tomfoolery last night."

Luke saw that his cousin was approaching the widow, and he stepped between them. "For shame of you, Tony!" he said, in a quivering voice. "You ought never to show your face after what has been done—at all events here."

"Get aside," answered Anthony, roughly, and thrust him out of the way.

"Madame Malvine," said he, planting himself before the hysterical widow, "listen to me. I am very sorry and ashamed for

what I did. It was in utter ignorance. I was dared to go to the churchyard last night when the ghosts walk, and Fox said no one would believe me that I had been there unless I brought back some token. We had all been drinking. The night was pitch dark. I got up the avenue under the trees, and pulled up the stake nearest to the church porch I could feel. Whose it was, as Heaven is my witness, I did not know. I was wrong in doing it; but I was dared to do something of the kind."

"You must have known that my brother-in-law lay on the right-hand side of the porch," said Solomon Gibbs.

"How should I know?" retorted Anthony. "I am not sexton, to tell where every one lies. And on such a pitch-black night too, I could find my way only by feeling."

"Your offence," said Luke, sternly, "is not against this family only, but against God. You have been guilty of sacrilege."

"I will ask you not to interfere," answered Anthony. "With God I will settle the matter in my own conscience. I am come here to beg forgiveness of Mistress Malvine and of Urith."

He turned sharply round to the latter, and spoke with a deep flush in his cheek, and with outstretched arm. "Urith! you will believe me! You will forgive me! With my best heart's blood I would wipe out the offence. I never, never dreamed of injuring and paining you. It was a misadventure and my cursed folly in sitting drinking at the Hare and Hounds, and of allowing myself to be taunted to a mad act by Fox Crymes, who is my evil genius."

"It was Fox Crymes who urged you to it?" asked Urith, her rigidity ceasing, and the colour returning to her cheeks and lips.

"He goaded me to the act, but he had nothing to do with my bringing your father's headpiece to the tavern; that was the devil's own witchcraft."

"Mother," said Urith, "do you hear; it was Fox Crymes's doing. On him the blame falls."

"You believe me, Urith—I know you must! You know I would not injure you, offend you, grieve you in any way. You must know that, Urith—you do in your heart know it; assure your mother of that. Here, give me your hand in pledge that you believe—that you forgive me."

She gave it him at once.

"Now, see, Mistress Malvine, Urith is my testimony—Good God! what is the matter?"

Mrs. Malvine had fallen back in her chair, and was speechless.

CHAPTER X.

LUKE CLEVERDON.

Luke Cleverdon left the house. He could no longer endure to remain in it. He saw the flash in Urith's eye as she put her hand in that of Anthony in answer to his appeal. He had seen sufficient to shake and wring his heart with inexpressible pain. He walked hastily down the hill, but stopped at the ruined chapel, and entered there. The old broken altar lay there, one of its supports fallen. Luke seated himself on a block of granite, and rested his arm against the altar slab, and laid his head on his arm. That he had long loved Urith he knew but too well for his peace of mind, but never before had his passion for her so flamed up as at that moment when she took his cousin's hand. What had occurred on the

previous day on the moor was repeated again; it was as though a smouldering fire had suddenly caught a great tuft or bush, almost a tree, of gorse, and had mounted in a pillar of flame.

Was Anthony in all things to be preferred to him? In the house at Hall Luke had submitted without demur to be set aside on all occasions, for Anthony was the son, and Luke but the nephew, of the old man; Hall would one day be the inheritance of Anthony, and in Hall the son of old Anthony's brother had no portion. But now that he had left his uncle's house, now that he was independent, was Anthony still to stand in his way, to lay his hand on and claim the one flower that Luke loved, but which he dared not put forth his hand to pluck?

Timid and humble-minded as Luke was, he had never considered that he could win the affections of any girl, leastways of one such as Urith. But it was a delight to him to see her, to watch the unfolding of her mind, and character, and beauty; to know that she was a wild moor flower, regarded by no one else but himself, sought by none, or, if sought, rejecting such seekers with disdain. He was so simple and single in

his aims, that it would have well contented him to merely admire and humbly love Urith, never revealing the state of his heart, asking of her nothing but friendship and regard. But when, all at once, he saw another stand beside her, take her hand, and seize on her heart with bold temerity, and by his boldness win it—that was too much for Luke to endure without infinite pain and a battle with himself. If he had formed any ideal picture of the future, it was the harmless one of himself as the friend—the gentle, unassuming, unasserting friend—of Urith, suffered by her, after some little resistance, to direct her headlong character, brighten the gloomy depths of her strange mind. He knew how greatly she needed an adviser and guide, and his highest ambition was so to help her that she might become a noble and generous woman. That he had not formed this hope out of pure pastoral zeal he knew, for he who taught others to search their own consciences—not lightly, and after the manner of dissemblers with God—had explored his own heart, and measured all its forces; but till this moment he had never realized that there was a selfishness and jealousy in his

love—a selfishness which would have kept back Urith from knowing and loving any one, and a jealousy, intense and bitter, against the man who obtained that place in Urith's heart to which he himself laid no claim, but which he hoped would be for ever empty.

He tried to pray, but was unable to do more than move his lips and form words. Prayers did not appease the ardour, lessen the anguish within. As he looked up at the moor, he saw now that it was still smoking. The storm of rain in the night had not quenched the fires, nor could the dews of Divine consolation put out that which blazed within his breast.

He had never envied Anthony till now. When he had been at school, he had been but scantily furnished with pocket-money; there had been many little things he would have liked to buy, but could not, having so small a sum at his disposal. On the other hand, Anthony could at all times command his father's purse, had spent money as he liked, had wasted it wantonly; but Luke had accepted the difference with which they had been treated without resentment; yet now that Anthony had stepped in between

him and Urith, something very much like hatred formed like gall in his heart.

He tried to think that he was angry with his cousin for having given Mistress Malvine pain, with having been guilty of sacrilege, but he was too truthful in his dealings with himself to admit that these were the springs of the bitterness within.

Suddenly he looked up with a start, and saw Bessie before him, observing him with sympathetic distress. His pale forehead was covered with sweat-drops, and his long thin hands were trembling. They had been clasped, the one on the other, on the altar-stone, and Luke's brow had rested on them, his face downwards, thus he had not seen Bessie when she approached,

"What is it Luke?" she said, in kindly tones, full of commiseration. "Are you ill, dear cousin."

He looked at her somewhat vacantly for a moment, gathering his senses together. As in bodily pain, after a paroxysm, the mind remains distraught for a moment, and is unable to throw itself outward, so it is with mental pain to an even greater degree. As Bessie spoke, Luke seemed to be brought, or to bring himself, by an effort, out of a

far-off world into that in which Bessie stood surrounded by the old chapel walls, hung with hartstongue leaves, still green, untouched by winter frost.

"What are you suffering from?" she asked, and seated herself at his side.

"It is nothing, cousin," he answered, and shook his head to shake away the thoughts that had held him.

"It is indeed something," she said gently; "I know it is; I see it in your white and streaming face." She took his hand in hers, "I know it from your cold hand. Luke, you have had no one but me to talk to of your troubles in boyhood, and I had none but you to tell of my little girlish vexations. Shall we be the same now, and confide in each other?"

Oh, false Bessie! knowing she was false, as she said this. The keen eye of her Aunt Magdalen had seen what Bessie supposed was hidden from every one, that she loved her cousin Luke. But to Luke would that secret assuredly never be entrusted. It was to be a one-sided confidence.

"Are you ill? Are you in bodily pain?" she asked.

He shook his head—not now to shake away thought, but in negative. He passed

his disengaged hand and sleeve over his brow, and was at once composed. "I am sorry you saw me like this, Bessie. I thought no one would come in here."

"I have come to see Urith, after last night. I promised her I would come some time, and I thought I would ask if she were quite well, for the day was to her long and trying."

"Do not go on there now," said Luke, gently, releasing his hand. "There has something happened. You have not heard, but it will be noised everywhere shortly, and the shock has been too much for Mistress Malvine; she has fallen into a fit."

"Then I had better go on, cousin; I may be of help to Urith."

"You have not heard——" Then he told her what Anthony had done the preceding night. Bessie was greatly disturbed; the act was so profane, and so inconsiderate. The inconsiderateness might, indeed, partially excuse the act, but hardly redeem it from sacrilege, and was certain to arouse general and deep indignation; the inconsiderateness showed an unbalanced mind, wanting in ordinary regard for the feelings of others.

"And yet," said Elizabeth, "this is not what has made you so unhappy. You have not told me all."

Luke remained silent, looking before him. "Bessie," said he, "has it never been observed by you that Anthony had an affection for Urith?"

"Never," answered Elizabeth; "I do not see how there could have sprung up such a liking. They hardly ever can have spoken to each other before yesterday, though they may have met; as, for instance, seen each other in church. I never heard Anthony name her."

"He does not tell you what he has in his heart."

"I did not believe that he has had any particular regard for any one. He has not been a person to seek the company of young maidens; he has affected to utterly scorn them, and has held himself aloof from their company."

"I think—I am sure he likes her," said Luke, slowly.

Then Bessie turned her face and looked at him steadily.

"Oh, Luke! Luke!" she exclaimed, and there was pain in her tone. "I have read

your heart. Now I know all." And now that she had discovered his secret, Luke was glad to be able to pour out his heart into her sympathetic ear, to tell her how that he did love Urith, but also how that he had never dreamed of making her his wife.

"My wife!" said he, with a sad smile; "that is not a name I shall ever be able to give to any woman. It is not one that any woman would care for me to call her by."

Bessie listened as he talked, without a sign in her face of other emotion than pity for him. Not in the slightest did she raise a fold of the veil that concealed her heart, the rather did she wrap it round her the more closely.

After a while Luke rose relieved. He took Bessie's hand in his, and said, "Now dear cousin, you must make me a promise. When you have any trouble at heart, you will come and tell me." She pressed his hand and raised her eyes timidly to his, but made no other answer.

They walked together down the hill, and then, at the bridge, parted. When they parted, Bessie's eyes filled with tears.

But the heart of Luke was relieved, and he walked homewards encouraged to fight

out the battle with himself, and overcome the jealousy with which he began to regard his cousin Anthony.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GLOVES AGAIN.

Anthony remained at Willsworthy. He had behaved exceedingly badly, had wounded the good lady of the house where most susceptible to pain, and so acutely that she had fallen into unconsciousness; yet he remained on. He was accustomed to consult his own wishes, not those of others, and to put on one side all considerations of expediency and good feeling, where his own caprice was concerned.

Urith and the servant wench had carried Madame Malvine to her room, and Solomon Gibbs had dashed off to the stables to get his horse, so as to ride and summon the surgeon from Tavistock.

Anthony was alone in the little hall, and he leaned his elbows on the window-sill

and looked out. There was nothing for him to see; nothing to interest him in the barn wall opposite, which was all that was commanded by the window; so he turned his eyes on a peacock butterfly that had hybernated in the hall, and now, with return of spring, shook off sleep and fluttered against the leaded panes, bruising its wings in vain efforts to escape into the outer air. There were no flowers in the window; nothing at all save some dead flies, and a pair of lady's riding-gloves folded together.

Anthony looked round the hall. It was low, not above seven feet high, unceiled, with black oak unmoulded rafters. There was large granite fireplace, no sculptured oak mantelpiece over it; nothing save a plain shelf; and above it some arms—a couple of pistols, a sword, a pike or two, and a cross-bow. The walls were not panelled save only near the window, where was the table, and where the family dined. The walls elsewhere were plainly white-washed, and had not even that decoration that was affected at the tavern—ballads with quaint woodcuts pasted against them. There was no deer park attached to the house; there never had been even a paddock for deer,

consequently there were no antlers in the hall.

Near the window was a recess in the wall over a granite pan or bowl partly built into the wall. At first sight it might be taken to be a basin in which to wash the hands ; but it had no pipe from it to convey the fouled water away. Such pans are found in many old Western farmhouses and manor halls, and their purport is almost forgotton. They were formerly employed for the scalding of the milk and the making of clouted cream. Red-hot charcoal was placed in these basins, and the pans of milk planted on the cinders. The pans remained there, the coals being fanned by the kitchen-maid, till the cream was formed on the surface, and in this cream-coat the ring of the bottom of the pan indicated itself on the surface. This was the token that the milk had yielded up its full quotient of fatty matter. Thereupon the pan was removed to the cool dairy. The presence of the granite cream-producer showed that the hall served a double purpose : it was not only a sitting and dining room, but one in which some of the dairy processes were carried on. Moreover, near the entrance-door, was what

was called the "well-room," entered from the hall. This was a small lean-to apartment on one side of the porch, paved with cobble-stones, in which was a stone trough always brimming with crystal moorland water, conducted into it from outside, and running off, was carried away outside again. As this was the sole source whence all the water-supply required for the house was obtained—for dairy, for kitchen, and for table—it may be imagined that the hall was a passage-room, traversed all day long by the servant-wenches with pails, and pans, and jugs.

Such an arrangement was suitable enough in the time before the Wars of the Roses, when Willsworthy was built; but its inconvenience became apparent with the improved social conditions of the Tudor reigns, and in the time of Elizabeth an addition had been made to the house, so that it now possessed two small parlours looking into the garden at the back; but these Anthony had not seen. In these some attempt was made at ornamentation. A manor house before the Tudor epoch rarely consisted of more than a hall, a lady's bower, kitchen, and cellars, on the ground-floor; Willsworthy had been enlarged

by the addition of a second parlour, with the object of abandoning the hall, to become a sort of second kitchen.

But the family had been poor, and continued in its ancestral mode of life. The second parlour had its shutters shut, and was never used, and Madame Malvine sat, as had her husband, and the owners of Willsworthy before them, in the hall, and endured the traffic through it, and the slops on the stone floor from the overflowing pails.

The paving of the hall was of granite blocks, rudely fitted together, and was strewn with dry brown bracken. We marvel at the discomfort of ancient chairs, because the seats are so high from the ground. We forget that the footstool was an attendant inseparable from the chair, when ladies sat in these stone-floored halls. They were necessary adjuncts, holding their feet out of the draught, and off the stone.

Small and mean as the manor house would appear in one's eyes now, yet it was of sufficient consequence in early days to have its chapel, a privilege only accorded to the greater houses, and wealthiest gentry. The chapel was now in ruins. It had not been used since the Reformation.

Anthony became impatient of waiting. He would not leave, and he was vexed, because he was kept loitering at the window without some one to speak to.

He was tired of looking at the butterfly battering its wings to pieces, so he took up the gloves and unrolled them—a pretty pair of fine leather ladies' gloves, reaching to the elbow, and laced with silk ribbon and silver tags. Elegant gloves; more handsome, Anthony thought, than suited the usual style of Urith's dress. He had nothing else to do but turn them inside out, unfold, and refold them.

As he was thus engaged, he thought over an interview he had had that morning with his father. With all his faults, and they were many, the young man was open and direct, and he had told his father what he had done the night before.

To his surprise, directly old Cleverdon heard that he had pulled up Richard Malvine's head post, and thrown it on the tavern table before the topers, he burst into an exultant laugh, and rubbed his hands together gleefully.

When, moreover, Anthony expressed his intention of going to Willsworthy to offer

an apology, the old man had vehemently and boisterously dissuaded him from so doing.

"What are the Malvines?" he had said; "a raggle-taggle, beggarly crew. I won't have it said that a son of mine veiled his bonnet to them. That was a fair estate once, but first one portion and then another portion has been sold away, and now there is but enough left on which to starve. Pshaw! let them endure and pocket the affront. If they try to resent it, and prosecute you in court of law, I will throw in my money-bag against their moleskin purse, and see which cause then has most weight in the scales of justice."

The intemperance of his father's conduct and words had on young Anthony precisely the opposite effect to that intended. It opened the young man's eyes to the gravity of his conduct. Without answering his father he went to Willsworthy, leaving the old man satisfied that he had overborne his son's resolution to make amends for his offence. Whether this would have happened had not Urith produced so strong an impression on his heart the previous day, and enlisted him on her side, may well be

questioned; for this visit of apology involved an acknowledgment of wrong-doing which was not readily made by Anthony. He was thinking over, and wondering at, his father's conduct, when Urith entered the hall, and expressed surprise at seeing him.

"I tarried," said he, "to know how it fared with your mother."

Urith replied, somewhat stiffly, "The shock of hearing what you had done has given her a fit."

"She has had them before?"

"Oh, yes. She cannot endure violent emotion, and your behaviour——"

"I have said I am sorry; what can I do more? Tell me, and I will do it. The stake was rotten, and broke off. If you will, I will have a stone slab placed on the grave at my own cost."

Urith flushed dark.

"That I refuse in my mother's name and in mine. We will not be beholden to you—to any stranger—in such a matter; and after what has been done, certainly not to you."

Anthony stamped with impatience.

"I have told you I am sorry. I never made an apology to any one in my life before.

I supposed that an apology offered was at once frankly accepted. I have told you it was all a mistake. I intended no ill. The night was pitch-black—I could not see what I laid hold of. My act was, if you will, an act of folly—but have you never committed acts of folly? You ran away from home yesterday. Did not that trouble your mother, and occasion greater perturbation of feeling?"

Urith looked down. "Yes," she said, "one foolery followed on another. First came mine, then yours. The two combined were too much for my mother to endure."

"We are a couple of fools; be it so," said Anthony. "Now that is settled. Young folk's brains are not ripened, but are like the pith in early hazel nuts. It is not their fault if they act foolishly. That is settled. You believed my account. I never lie, though I be a fool."

"Yes, I have accepted your account, and I, in part, forgive you."

"In part! By Heaven, that is a motley forgiveness—a fool's forgiveness. I must have a complete one. Come here. Come to this window. Why should I shout across the hall to you, and you stand with your

back turned to me, as though we were on opposite sides of the Cleave?" He spoke with as much imperiousness as if he were in his own house, commanded her as though he expected of her as ready submission as was accorded him by his sister.

"What do you want with me? I do not care to go near a man subject to such outbreaks of folly."

"You are one to declaim!" said Anthony, scornfully. "You who run away, and bite your knuckles till they are raw."

Urith's brow darkened. "You might have spared me that taunt," she said; "you would have done so had you been generous."

"Come over here," commanded Anthony. "How can I measure my words when I have to throw them at you from a furlong off? It is like a game of quoits when one has not strid the distance, and knows not what force to employ."

Urith without further demur came to him. This was a new experience to her to be addressed in tones of command; her mother scolded and found fault, and gave, indeed, orders which she countermanded next moment, so that Urith had grown up with the habit of following her own desires, and

disregarding the contradictory or impossible injunctions laid on her.

"Come here, Urith," said Anthony; "I do not see why we have been such strangers heretofore. Why do you never come to Hall?"

"Because Hall has never come to Willsworthy."

"But my sister; you would like Bessie—I am sure of that."

"I like her now."

"Then you will come and see her at Hall?"

"When she has first been to see me, and has asked me to return the visit."

"She shall do that at once."

"She has promised to come here. She was very kind to me last night."

"She is a good creature," said Anthony, condescendingly.

"And no fool," threw in Urith.

"I don't say she is clever, but what brains she has are full ripe. She is considerably older than myself."

To this Urith made no response.

Then Anthony took up the gloves, drew them out, and passed them under the ribbon of his hat.

"I was your true knight yesterday, achieving your deliverance, and every true knight must wear either his lady's colours or some pledge to show that she has accepted him as her knight. That, I have heard say, is how some crests were given or taken. Now I have assumed mine—your gloves. I take them as my right, and shall wear them in your name."

"They are not mine," said Urith; "you will do me a favour if you will take them for me to her to whom they of right belong, and say that I return them to her. She lost them last night, and I found them. I never go near Kilworthy—never have an opportunity of seeing her—and her brother I am not likely to see. Therefore I beseech you to convey them to her from me."

"To whom? Not Julian?"

"Yes, to Julian."

Anthony muttered an oath.

"I will take them from my hat and throw them under foot," he said, angrily. "I did not ask for a favour of Julian Crymes, but for something of yours, Urith."

"You did not ask any one for a favour," she replied, gravely. "You took the gloves unasked."

He pulled them from his hat, and was about to cast them back on the window-sill, when Urith arrested his hand.

"No," she said; "I asked you a favour, and you will not be so discourteous a knight as to refuse it me."

"You take me as your knight!" exclaimed Anthony, with a flash of pleasure from his eyes that met hers, and before which hers fell.

"My errand boy," she said, with a smile, "my foot-page to carry messages from me. You will take the gloves to Julian Crymes."

"Not in my hat, but in my belt thus," said Anthony, passing them under his girdle. Then, after a pause, he said, "You have given me nothing."

"Yes I have."

"What? Only another maid's gloves?"

"Something else. My forgiveness."

"Full?"

"Yes—full. Go now and take the gloves."

"I shall return another day for something of your own."

Still he loitered; then suddenly looked up with a laugh. "Mistress! What is your livery? What your colour?"

"My colour! Yellow—yellow as the marigold, for I am jealous."

"Then, here is my hat. You shall put your badge in it."

"Not till I admit your service."

"You have—you have given me a commission."

Urith laughed. "Very well. There are marsh marigolds in the brook. You shall have them."

CHAPTER XII.

AND AGAIN.

Anthony went home to Hall. He was on foot—if he must go to Kilworthy and return the gloves to Julian Crymes, he would ride. They hung in his girdle. His hat was gay with marsh marigolds. A sudden overwhelming intoxication of happiness had come over Urith. She was loved, and loved in return. Her heart had hitherto known no love, or only that which was rendered as a duty to an exacting and trying mother. The world to her had become wider, brighter, the sky higher. The condition in which her mother was was forgotten, for a moment, for a moment only, as with fluttering heart and trembling fingers, and pulses that leaped and then were still, she picked the marigolds and put

them in his cap. Then he was gone, and she returned at once to her mother's room.

Anthony wore his hat ajaunt as he strode into the yard of Hall, and when he saw his sister Bessie in the door, he called to her to come to him, to save himself the trouble of taking a dozen steps to her out of his way to the stable.

She obeyed the summons at once.

"Bess!" said he, "I have made a promise for thee. I have been to Willsworthy, and have said that thou wilt go there to-day."

"Oh, Anthony!" said Elizabeth, in return. "How could you do as you have done concerning the headpiece?"

"There, there! that is finished and done for. I sent it back the same night. I called up the sexton to help me. But the matter is at an end, and I will not have it stirred again. Do you hear, you must go to Willsworthy this day. I have passed my word."

"I cannot, Tony. I was on my way there, when I met Luke, and he told me what you had done. Then for shame I could not go on, but returned home."

"I went there and made my peace," said Anthony. "Do not blow a drop of soap into

a vast globe. It is all over and mended. I said I was sorry, and that was the end of the matter."

"But Luke told me that Mistress Malvine has had a fit because of it."

"She has had the like before and has recovered; she will be herself again to-morrow—and, it matters not! sickly and aged folk must expect these accidents. You shall go to Willsworthy to-day."

"I cannot indeed, brother, for my father has forbidden it."

"Forbidden your going there?"

"Yes, brother, when I came back, he asked where I had been, and when I told him, he was wroth, and bade me never go there again. He would not, he said, have it appear that he was begging off from the consequences of what you had done."

"I have begged off. That is to say—I explained it was all a mistake. I meant no wrong, and so it is covered up and passed over."

"That may be, Tony, but against my father's command I cannot go."

"It is such folly," said Anthony, "I will go and see him myself. You shall go there. I told Urith I would send you. My father shall not make my word empty."

He strode forward to his father's room.

She caught his arm, and said, in a low tone, "Brother, why do you make so much now of Urith Malvine? Are you treating her as your true love?"

"True love!" repeated he, scornfully, "That is the way with all you woman-kind. If one but sees a handsome girl, and speaks two words to her, at once you arrive at the notion that we have chosen each other as true lovers, passed rings and promises, and writ for a marriage licence. Let me go by."

He walked into the house, and to his father's room, which he entered without announcing himself.

The old man sat by the fire. His account-books were on the table, at his side. The fire was of turf and wood.

"What is this, father?" began Anthony, in his imperious fashion, "That you have forbidden Bess to go to see the Malvine family, and the Madame is ill, had a falling fit this morning."

"It is not for us to make a scrape and a cringe to the like of them," answered the old man, raising himself in his chair by a hand on each arm, as he had sunk doubled

in the seat. "I take it the Cleverdons need not stoop to that beggar brood."

"I did wrong," said Anthony, shortly. "And I have been to Willsworthy, and said I was sorry. I offered to put up a monument of stone to Master Richard Malvine at our own cost."

"You did!"

"Yes, father, I did, I would do it at my own expense."

"You have not a penny but what I allow you, and not one penny would I hand out for such a purpose."

"Then it is as well that my offer was refused."

"I bade you forbear going to that house when you spoke of it this morning."

"You advised me not to go; but my conscience spake louder than your voice, father, and I went."

"How were you received?" asked old Cleverdon, with a malignant leer.

Anthony shrugged his shoulders: "The old Madam fell into a fit at the sight of me. There was also Luke there."

"Oh, Luke!" said Anthony senior, with a sneer. "He may go there; but no son or daughter of mine. We do not consort

with beggars. That is enough. You have been. Do not go again. If they bring the matter into a court of law I am well content—more than content, for it will reduce them to utter beggary, and they will have, maybe, to sell, and I will buy them out." He looked into the fire and laughed at the thought. Then, turning his face round over his pointed shoulder, he said, in an altered tone, "I am glad you are here at present; you do not often give me a chance of a talk, and now I wish to speak with you of serious matters. You are getting to be a man, Tony—quite a man—and must think of settling in life. It is high time for us to have the arrangement with Julian Crymes, for instance——"

"What arrangement?"

"Oh, you know. It has been an understood thing. You have not been ignorant, though you may affect to know nothing about it. Fine property hers! All the Kilworthy estate after her father's death. He has it for his life. But there is money. A good deal, I doubt not, will go with her hand at once. If we had that we could clear the mortgage off Hall."

Anthony frowned, and folded his arms.

"I am against delaying marriage till late," continued old Cleverdon; "so I propose you have a talk with Julian at once, and get her to say when it is to be. Some time this year; but not in May—May marriages are unlucky." The old man chuckled, and said, "I reckon your honeymoon you will find a harvest moon."

"I have no fancy for Julian Crymes," said Anthony; "I never had."

"Pshaw! Of course you have a fancy for Kilworthy. It will fit on with Hall bravely; and so the old Glanville property will come together all in time to the Cleverdons."

"I am not going to take Julian for the sake of Kilworthy. Of that you may be assured," said Anthony.

"Oh, yes, you will; but I dare say you want to keep out of chains a little longer. If so, I do not press you. Nevertheless, in the end it comes to this—you must take Julian and her estate."

"I will have neither the one nor the other," said Anthony. "I do not want to marry—when I do I will please myself."

"You will consult my wishes and my plans," said the father. "But there, I have

said enough. Turn the thing over in your head; the girl likes you, small blame to her —you are the bravest cockerel in the district, and can crow loud enough to make all others keep silence."

"I will never take Julian," again said Anthony. "It is of no use, father, urging this; she has been thrown at me, and has thrown herself at me. I may have prattled and laughed with her, but I never cared much for her. I shall never take but the maid that pleases me; I give you assurance of this, father."

"Well, well, that will suffice. I was too early in speaking. Take your time; in the end you will see through my spectacles. Now I am busy; you may go."

Anthony left. He was irritated at his father for endeavouring to force him to marry Julian Crymes, irritated with him for his depreciatory tone when speaking of the Malvines, irritated with him for not allowing his sister to go to Willsworthy.

At the present moment he felt very reluctant to go to Kilworthy and see Julian to return to her the pair of gloves. After she had been thrust on him and he had declined to think of her, he felt out of humour for

a visit to her; he had lost command of himself, in his annoyance, and might speak with scant courtesy.

"If I could light on Fox, I would give him the gloves," said Anthony, as he mounted the horse.

He rode out on a down near Hall, and there drew rein, uncertain whether he would go direct to Kilworthy or not.

"No," said he, "I will ride first to Peter Tavy and see that the head-post of Master Malvine be secure. I will give the sexton something to have the foot scarfed, that it may not fall over or give way. After that I can go to Kilworthy." So he turned his horse's head in the direction of the inn, the Hare and Hounds at Cudlip Town, where he would fall into the road to Peter Tavy.

In his irritation at what his father had proposed, he forgot about the bunch of flowers in his hat. He left them there disregarded, fretting in his mind at his father's attempt to force him to a union that was distasteful to him. He liked Julian well enough; she was a handsome girl. He had admired her, he had played the lover—played without serious intent, for his heart had not been touched—but now he enter-

tained an aversion from her, an aversion that was not old; it dated but from the previous day, but it had ripened whilst his father spoke to him of her.

Anthony was this day like a charged electric battery, and any one that came near him received a shock. His father had seen that the mood of the young man was not one in which he would bear to be contradicted; the old man was aware that his son would discharge his feelings against him quite as readily as against another, and he, therefore, had the discretion not to press a point that irritated Anthony, and was like to provoke an outburst.

And now, as Anthony rode over the down, past many old tumuli covering the dead of prehistoric times, he had no eyes for the beauty of the scene that opened before him, eyes for no antiquities that he passed, ears for none of the fresh and pleasant voices of early spring that filled the air; he was occupied with his own thoughts, grumbling and muttering over the matters of dissatisfaction that had risen up and crossed him. He had apologized for the outrage committed on Richard Malvine's grave, but he could not excuse himself for having occa-

sioned a shock to Mistress Malvine. He was angry with his father for the slighting manner in which he spoke of the Malvines, for having forbidden Bessie going to them, for having endeavoured to force him into an engagement with Julian. He would please himself, murmured Anthony to himself; in such a matter as this he would brook no dictation. His liking for Urith was too young to have assumed any shape or force, and he had no thoughts of its leading any further. Such as it was, it had been fed and stimulated by opposition—the interference on the moor, the opposition of his father, the difficulties put in his way by his own act—but then Anthony was just the man to be settled in a course by encountering opposition therein.

He crossed the river, reached Cudlip Town, and saw the surgeon's horse hitched up outside the tavern. The doctor had been to Willsworthy, and had halted at the Hare and Hounds for refreshment on his way home.

Anthony at once dismounted. He would go in there and ask tidings of the health of the widow.

He fastened up his horse and entered the

tavern, in his usual swaggering, defiant manner, with his hat on, and a frown on his brow. He found in the inn, not the surgeon only, but James Cudlip, and to his surprise, Anthony Crymes.

The relationship in which Anthony Cleverdon stood to Fox was intimate but not cordial. They had known each other and had associated together since they were children; they had been at school together, they hunted, and rabbited, and hawked together. Anthony was not one who could endure to be alone, and as he had no other companion of his age and quality with whom to associate, he took up with Fox rather than be solitary. But when together they were ever bickering. Fox's bitter tongue made Anthony start, and with his slow wit he was incapable of other retort than threat. Moreover, from every one else, young Anthony received flattery; only from Fox did he get gibes. He bore in his heart a simmering grudge against him that never boiled up into open quarrel. Fox took a malicious delight in tormenting his comrade, whom he both envied and disliked.

That Anthony Crymes had paid his ad-

dresses to Urith, and had been refused, was unknown to Anthony Cleverdon, to whom Crymes confided no secrets of his heart or ambition.

When Anthony caught sight of Fox at the table, he checked the question relative to the condition of Madame Malvine that rose to his lips, and came over to the settle.

"Why! what a May Duke have we here!" exclaimed Fox Crymes, pointing with a laugh at Anthony's cap. "What is the meaning of this decoration?"

Instead of replying, Anthony called for ale.

"And wearing his mistress' gloves as well!" shouted Crymes.

"They are not my mistress' gloves," answered Anthony, hastily, in a tone of great irritation. "If you would know, Fox, whose they are, then I tell you, they belong to your sister."

"How came you by them? And wherefore wear them?"

"I was on the look out for you, Fox, to return them to you for her. I do not want them. She lost them overnight."

"And where did you find them? On the moor?"

"They were given to me by the finder. Will that satisfy you? I will answer no more questions."

Crymes saw that Anthony Cleverdon was in an irascible mood—such a mood as gave him special opportunities for vexing Anthony and amusing himself.

"And now about your posie of golden cups?" he asked tauntingly.

"I said I would answer no more questions."

"It is not necessary. I know very well where you have been."

"I have been at home—at Hall," said Anthony, going over to the table from the settle, where he felt himself uneasy with all eyes fixed on him. He pulled the gloves out of his belt and laid them before him, and drew them their full length on the table, then smoothed them with his finger. He wished he had not entered the inn; his face was clouded, and his muscles twitched, Crymes enjoying his evident annoyance. He sat on the further side of the table, with his mug of beer by him.

"I know very well where you have been," said Fox again, with his twinkling, malicious eyes fixed on Anthony. "I was at the same place the day before yesterday; and

also came off with a posie—but a better one than yours."

"It is a lie!" burst from the irritated young man, starting. "Urith never——" Then he checked himself, as Fox broke into ironical laughter at the success of his essay to extract from Anthony the secret of his bunch of marigolds. Anthony saw he had been trapped, and became more chafed and hot than before.

"Do you know what she meant by giving you those flowers?" asked Crymes, and paused with his eyes on the man he was bating.

Anthony answered with a growl.

"You know what they are called by the people?" said Crymes,—"Drunkards. And, when you were presented with that posie, it was as much as to say that none save one to whom such a term applied would have acted as you had done last night, in committing an offence against a dead man's grave, and in adding insult to injury by visiting the widow and child to-day."

The blood poured into Anthony's face, and dazzled his eyes. A malevolent twitch of the muscles of the mouth of Fox, showed how the latter enjoyed tormenting him.

"Go again a little later in the season, and Urith will find another, and even more appropriate, adornment for your hat—a coxcomb!"

Yeoman Cudlip and Surgeon Doble laughed aloud, so did the serving-wench who had just brought in Anthony's ale.

The young fellow, stung beyond endurance, sprang to his feet with a snort—he could not speak—and struck Fox across the face with the gloves.

Crymes uttered a cry of pain and rage, and with his hand to his eye drew the hunting-knife from his belt, and struggled out of his place to get at Anthony. The surgeon and yeoman threw themselves in his way and disarmed him, the girl screamed, and fled to the kitchen.

"He has blinded me!" gasped Fox, as he sank back into a seat. "I cannot see."

Anthony was alarmed. Water was brought, and the face of Crymes washed. One of the silver tags of the glove had struck and injured the right eyeball.

CHAPTER XIII.

WIDOW PENWARNE.

There are epochs in the lives of most men when a sad fatality seems to dog their steps and turn athwart all that they do. Anthony had come to such an epoch suddenly since that ride and walk along the Lyke-Way. He had allowed himself to be taunted into a foolish visit to the churchyard on St. Mark's Eve; when there he had desecrated a grave, then he had thrown Madame Malvine into a fit, he had disagreed with his father, and now had injured the eye of his comrade.

Anthony's anger cooled down the moment he was aware of what he had done, but this was not a piece of mischief that could be put to rights at once like the replacing of the headpiece of the grave. His presence

in the room was a distraction and cause of irritation to the man he had hurt, now in the hands of the surgeon, and he deemed it advisable to leave the inn, mount his horse, and ride away to Peter Tavy Church, where he desired to have a word with the sexton and carpenter relative to the old head-post of Malvine's grave.

Peter Tavy Church, or the Church of St. Peter on the Tavy, is a grey granite edifice, mottled with lichen, with moorstone pinnacles, and a cluster of fine old trees in the yard. Externally the church is eminently picturesque, it was beautiful within at the time of our tale, in spite of the havoc wrought in the period of the Directory; of more recent times it has undergone a so-called restoration which has destroyed almost all the charms that remained.

For a long time it has been matter of felicitation that the old opprobrium attaching to the men of the West Country of being wreckers has ceased to apply; the inhumanity of destroying vessels and their crews for the sake of the spoil that could be got from them has certainly ceased. But we are mistaken if we suppose that wrecking as a profession, or pastime, has come to

an end altogether. The complaint has been driven inwards, or rather, wrecking is no longer practised on ships, which the law has taken under its protection, but on defenceless parish churches.

The havoc that has been wrought in our churches within the last thirty years is indescribable. In Cornwall, with ruthless and relentless activity, the parish churches have, with rare exceptions, been attacked one after another, and robbed of all that could charm and interest, and have been left cold and hideous skeletons. I know nothing that more reminds one (speaking ecclesiologically) of the desert strewn with the bones of what were once living and beautiful creatures, scraped of every particle of flesh, the marrow picked out of their bones, the soul, the divine spark of beauty and life, expelled for ever.

No sooner does a zealous incumbent find himself in the way of collecting money to do up his church, than he rubs his hands over it and says, "Embowelled will I see thee by and by." Falstaff was fortunately able to get away from the knife. Alas! not so our beautiful old churches. The architect and the contractor are

called in, and the embowelling goes on apace. All the old fittings are cast forth, the monumental slabs broken up, the walls are scraped and painted, plaster everywhere peeled off, just as the skin was taken off St. Bartholomew, and the shells are exulted over by architect, contractor, parson, and parishioners, as shells from which the bright soul has been expelled—*sans* beauty, *sans* interest, *sans* poetry, *sans* everything. The man of taste and feeling crosses the threshold, and falls back with the same sense as comes on the eater at a mouthful of bread from which the salt has been omitted, of something inexpressibly flat and insipid. Before its restoration, Peter Tavy Church had the remains of a beautiful roodscreen richly painted and gilt, and an unique pew of magnificent carved oak for the manorial lord to sit in, with twisted columns at the angles supporting heraldic lions.

Anthony Cleverdon dismounted from his horse at the churchyard, hitched up his beast, and entered the graveyard. He saw the sexton there, and talking to him was an old woman in threadbare dress, with grey hair, very dark piercing eyes; she was bent, and leaning on a staff. The woman was a stranger,

at all events, he did not know her, and yet there was a something in her features that seemed familiar to him. The sexton said a word or two to her, and she at once came down the church path to meet Anthony, extending to him her hand.

"Ah!" she said. "I can see, I can see my Margaret in your face—you have her eyes, her features, and the same toss of head. I know you. You have never, maybe, heard of me, and yet I am your grandmother. Have you come here to see your mother's grave? I am glad, I am glad it is cared for, not, I ween, by your father. Which of you thinks of the mother, and has set flowers on the grave—see, it is alight with primroses?"

"I believe that was Bessie's doing," answered Anthony, then involuntarily he looked at her shabby gown, patched and worn.

"I would like to see Bessie. Is she like you? If so—she is like your mother. Ah! My Margaret was the handsomest girl in all the West of England. You have not forgotten your mother, I hope, young man."

"I do not remember her—you forget, she died shortly after I was born."

"How should I know?" The old woman took his hand, and held it fast as she peered into his face with eager eyes. "How should I know, when your father never took the trouble to let me know that my own, my dear and only child, was dead? If I had known she was ill, I would have come to her, though he took, as he threatened to take, the pitchfork to me, if I crossed his threshold. I would have come and nursed her; then, maybe, she would not have died. But he did not tell me. He did not ask me to her burial, and not till long after did I hear that she was no more. He was a hard and a cruel man."

The clear tears formed in the old woman's eyes, and trickled down her cheeks.

"I have been ill all the winter, and very poor; but that was not known, and if known would not have concerned your father. When I got better, I came here to ask if I might be buried, when I die, near my Margaret. Or are you Cleverdons too great and fine now for that? Well—you will let me lie at her feet, though I was her mother, just as I have seen a dog put under the soles of the figures in old churches. You are her son, you are my own grandchild,

though you have never known me and cared for me, and given me a thought. Please the Lord, you are not hard as your father, and you will grant me this."

"I did not know I had a grandmother," said Anthony. "If there is anything you want, it shall be done."

"No, I do not suppose your father ever spoke of me. Your mother's father was the parson here, and died, leaving no money. I had to depart, and become a housekeeper to maintain myself, and what little money I then earned has been expended during my illness. Now you will let me see Bessie. She is good, she remembers her mother, and thinks of her."

Anthony endeavoured to withdraw his hand from the grasp of the old woman, but she would not suffer it; she laid the other caressingly on his, and said:—

"No, my boy, you will not be unkind, you will not go from me without a promise to bring me Bessie. I must see her."

"You shall come to Hall, and see her there."

She shook her grey head, "Never! never! I could not bear to be in that house where your mother, my poor Margaret, suffered.

Moreover, your father would not endure it! He threatened to take the pitchfork to me—when your mother was alive."

"He would not do that now," said Anthony. "But as you will. I will bring Bessie to you. Where shall I find you."

"I am staying at Master Youldon's. He knew my dear husband in old times, and knew me, and does not forget old kindnesses."

"Very well. You shall see Bessie. I have some business with the sexton."

Then he withdrew his hand from the old woman, and went to the grave of Richard Malvine, where he gave directions what was to be done to that and to the headpiece.

Widow Penwarne came to him.

"What is this?" she asked. "What have you to do with this grave?"

"I have some orders to give concerning it," answered Anthony, vexed at her interference. "I will speak with you later, madam."

"But what does the grave of Richard Malvine matter to you?" again she asked. "Ah!" she exclaimed, and went and picked some of the primroses from the mound above her daughter, and then strewed them over

the grave of Richard, "Ah!" she said. "Here lie two whose hearts were broken by your father—two for whom he will have to answer at the Judgment Day, and then I will stand up along with them, and point the finger at him, and accuse him. If there be a righteous God, then as He is righteous so will He judge and punish!"

"Why, well now, is not this strange?" exclaimed Anthony. "Here comes my sister Elizabeth. I wonder much what has brought her."

Bessie appeared, with a wreath of spring flowers in her hand. She had ridden, attended by a serving-man. She was surprised and pleased to see Anthony at Richard Malvine's grave.

"Oh, brother!" she said, "I have been so troubled over what had been done that I set to work to make a garland to hang on the grave, as some token of respect, and regret for what had been done."

"What, you also!" exclaimed the old woman, and went to her and clasped her hands. "You are Bessie Cleverdon, the dear child of my Margaret. Let me kiss you, ay, and bless you." She drew the head of Elizabeth to her and kissed her.

"This is our grandmother, Bessie," exclaimed Anthony.

"Ay!" said the old woman, studying the girl earnestly with her dark, eager eyes. "Yes, I am the grandmother of you both; but you are not like my Margaret, not in face, and yet not like your father. Please God in heaven—not like him in soul!" she said, with vehemence.

"Let us go aside," said Anthony, "out of earshot of the sexton, if you cannot speak of my father without such an overflow of spleen."

"Then we will go to your mother's grave," said Madame Penwarne. "I see, you stand by your father; but I can see this in you—that you will stand by him so long as he does not cross your will. Let him but oppose you, young man, where your headstrong will drives, and there will be trouble between you. Then, maybe, your father will begin to receive the chastisement from the hand of the Lord that has been hanging over him ever since he took Margaret to Hall. That is a strange turn of the wheel, that his two children should meet at the grave of Richard Malvine to care for its adornment. And, I warrant, you do not

know, either of you, what is owing to him who lies there—ay! and to her who rests at our feet."

"I can't understand riddles," said Anthony, "and it is no pleasure to me to hear hard words cast at my father. If you are in poverty, grandmother, you shall be helped. I will speak to my father about you, and when I speak he will listen and do as is fitting. Of that be assured. If you have anything further to say of my father, say it to him, not to me."

"I will take nothing, not a farthing of his," answered the old woman, sharply.

"Why not, grandmother?" asked Bessie, gently, and kissed the old woman's quivering cheek. "It will be the greatest unhappiness to Anthony and me to think that you are not provided for in your age, and in comfort. We shall not be able to rest if we suppose that you are in want. It would fill us with concern and self-reproach. My father is just, and he also——"

"No," said the old woman, interrupting her, "just is he not. Moreover, he owes me too much—or rather he owes my dead daughter, your mother, too much—he cannot repay it with coin: not one thousandth part.

You, Elizabeth, are older than your brother. You must know that your mother's life was made miserable, that she had no happiness at Hall."

"And I trust and believe," said Bessie, "that my dear mother, in the rest of Paradise, has long ago forgotten her troubles, and forgiven my father if he in any way annoyed her."

"Do not be so sure of that, child," exclaimed the old woman, with vehemence. "If I were to go out of this life to-morrow, I would go before the throne of God to denounce your father, and I would call Richard Malvine and your mother as witnesses against him. Shall I tell you what he did? These who lie here—he yonder, where you have placed the garland, and my poor Margaret—loved each other, and would have been happy with each other. But her father died, I was poor, and then for the sake of his money, Margaret was persuaded to take Anthony Cleverdon, and give up Richard Malvine."

"If that be so——" began young Anthony——

"It is so," said the old woman, vehemently.

"Then the blame lies with you," said he. "You pressed her to take the rich man and refuse the poor. My father was guiltless."

The widow drew back and trembled; but presently recovered herself and said, "That may be—I bear in part the blame. But if he had been kind to her it would have been other. I would not reproach him; but it was not so, and Bessie was old enough to remember that little love passed between them, that he was hard, and cruel, and unkind. He broke her heart—and there she lies."

"I am not here," said Anthony, "to hear my father reproached. I respect you as my grandmother; but you have doubtless a jaundiced eye, that sees all things yellow. I will look to it that something be done for you. It does not befit us that the mother of our mother should be in want."

As they spoke, from out of the church came Luke Cleverdon. His face was pale, and his eyes were sunken. The sexton had not known that he was in the sacred building. Luke came towards the little group, treading his way among the graves with care. The tomb of the Cleverdons was near the chancel south window. He extended

his hand to Mistress Penwarne, saying, "I was within. It was not my fault if I heard much that was said; and now I have but come into your midst, Anthony, Bessie, and you, Madame, to make a humble petition. I am curate in charge here; the rector is not resident. I live in the old parsonage, that must be so familiar to Mistress Penwarne—every room hallowed with some sweet recollection—and I am alone, and need a kinswoman to be my housekeeper, and"—he smiled at the old woman—"be to me as a mother. Madame, will you honour my poor roof by taking up your abode therein? It is, forsooth, more yours than mine, for there you lived your best days, and to it you are attached by strongest ties; and I am but a casual tenant. It is not mine—I am but the curate. Here we have no continuing city, and every house is to us but a tavern on our pilgrimage where we stay a night."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CLEAVE.

Throughout the day Willsworthy was full of visitors. Never before had it been so frequented. The act of Anthony Cleverdon had been bruited through the neighbourhood, and aroused general indignation against the young man and sympathy for the widow.

Mistress Malvine was sufficiently recovered in the afternoon to receive some of those who arrived in her bedroom, and Mr. Solomon Gibbs entertained the rest in the hall. Those who had known the Malvines well—there were not many—and those who knew them distantly, persons of the gentle class, of the yeoman and farmer ranks, all thought it incumbent on them to come, express their opinions, and inquire after the widow. Not only did these arrive, but also

many cottagers appeared at the kitchen door, full of sympathy—or at all events, of talk. It really seemed as though Willsworthy, which had dropped out of every one's mind, had suddenly claimed supreme regard.

A source of real gratification it was to the sick woman to assume a position of so much consequence. It is always a satisfaction to hear other persons pour out the vials of wrath and hold up hands in condemnation of those who have given one offence, and Madame Malvine was not merely flattered by becoming the centre of interest to the neighbourhood, but was influenced by the opinions expressed in her ear, and her indignation against Anthony was deepened.

Wherever in the house Urith went, she heard judgment pronounced on him in no measured terms, the general voice condemned him as heartless and profane. Question was made what proceeding would be taken against him, and abundance of advice was offered as to the course to be pursued to obtain redress. Urith was unable to endure the talk of the women in her mother's room, and she descended to the hall, there to hear her Uncle Solomon, amidst farmers and yeomen, tell the story

of Anthony's deed with much exaggeration, and to hear the frank expressions of disapproval it elicited.

Then she went into the kitchen where the poorer neighbours were congregated. Everywhere it was the same. Condemnation fell on Anthony. No one believed that he had not acted in wilful knowledge of what he was about.

Urith could not fail to observe that there was a widespread latent jealousy and dislike of the Cleverdons in the neighbourhood, occasioned partly, no doubt, by the success of the old man in altering his position and entering a superior class, but chiefly due to his arrogance, hardness, and meanness. All the faults in Anthony's character were commented on, and his good qualities denied or disparaged.

Urith could with difficulty restrain herself from contradicting these harsh judges, and in taking on her the defence of the culprit, but she saw clearly that her advocacy would be unavailing, and provoke comment.

She therefore left the house. Her mother was so much recovered as not to need her. Whether the old lady acted wisely in receiving so much company after her fit,

Urith doubted, but her mother had insisted on the visitors being admitted to her room, and under the excitement she rallied greatly.

To be away from the clatter of tongues, she left the farm, and went forth upon the moor.

To the north of Willsworthy rises a ridge of bold and serrated rocks that soar precipitously above the River Tavy, which foams below at a depth of five hundred feet; they present the appearance of a series of ruined towers, and are actually in places united by the remains of ancient walls of rude moorstone; for what purpose piled up, it is not possible to say.

A bar of red porphyritic granite crosses the ravine, and over this leaps the river into a deep pool, immediately beneath the boldest towers and pinnacles of rock that overhang. Among these crags, perched like an eagle above the dizzy abyss, sat Urith on a slab, listening to the roar of the river wafted up to her from beneath. Away to the north and east the moor extended, shoulder on shoulder, to the lonely peak of Fur Tor that rises in uttermost solitude near the sources of the Tavy amidst all but untraversable morasses. She was glad to be

there, alone, away from the lips that spit their venom on the name of Anthony.

The human heart is full of strange caprices, and is wayward as a spoiled child. The very fact that the whole country side was combined to condemn Anthony made Urith in heart exculpate him—that every mouth blamed him made her excuse him. It was true that he had acted with audacious folly, but there was merit in that audacity. What other youth would have ventured into the churchyard on such a night? The audacity so qualified the folly as almost to obliterate it. He had been challenged to the venture. Would it have been manly had he declined the challenge? Did not the blame attach to such as had dared him to the reckless deed? She repeated to herself the words that had been spoken in her mother's house about him, so extravagant in expression, exaggerated in judgment as to transcend justice, and her heart revolted against the extravagance and forgave him. If all the world stood up in condemnation, yet would not she. Her cheeks flushed and her eye sparkled. She recalled his chivalry towards her on the moor; she heard again his voice, recollected how he had held her

in his arms, she felt again the throb of his heart, heard his breathing as he strode with her through the flames, as he wrestled with her for the mastery; and she laughed aloud, she rejoiced that he had conquered. Had she overmastered him, and her will had been submitted to by him, she would have despised him. Because he was so strong in his resolution, so determined in carrying it out, she liked and respected him.

There flashed before her something like lightning—it was his eyes, lifted to hers, with that strange look that sent a thrill through all her veins and tingled in her extremities. That look of his had revealed to her something to which she dare not give a name, a something which gave him a right to demand of her that morning testimony to his integrity of purpose, a something that constrained her, without a thought of resistance, to give him what he asked, first her hand in witness that she believed him, then the bunch of flowers in token that she accepted him as her knight. As her knight?

Her heart bounded with pride and exultation at the thought! He her knight! He, the noblest youth in all the

region round, a very Saul, taller by the head and shoulders than any other, incomparably handsome, more manly, open, generous, brave—brave! who feared neither man nor midnight spectre.

Yet—when Julian Crymes had charged her with attempting to rob her of her lover, she, Urith, had repelled the charge, and had declared that she did not value, did not want him. Nor had she then valued, wanted him; but the very violence, the defiance of Julian had forced her to think of him—to think of him in the light of a lover. The opposition of Julian had been the steel stroke on her flinty heart that had brought out the spark of fire. If anything had been required to fan this spark into flame, that had been supplied by the chattering, censorious swarm of visitors this afternoon.

And Anthony? How stood he?

At that moment he was weighed down with a sense of depression and loneliness such as he had never felt previously. He had been accustomed to be flattered and made a great deal of. His father, his sister, his cousin, the servants, Fox Crymes, every one had shown him deference, had let him see that he was esteemed a man born to

fortune and success; he had been good at athletic exercises, good in sport, a good horseman, taller, stronger than his compeers, and heir to a wealthy gentleman. But all at once luck had turned against him; he had committed blunders, and had injured those with whom he had come in contact—possibly blinded Fox, had offended the Malvine family, thrown the old dame into a fit, had quarrelled with his father, brought down on his head the reproach and ridicule of all who knew him. Then came the encounter with his grandmother, and the discovery of the wrong done to his mother and to the father of Urith by his own father. Bold, self-opinionated as Anthony was, yet this sudden shock had humbled him and staggered him: he had fallen from a pinnacle and was giddy. A sort of irrational, blind instinct within him drove him back in the direction of Willsworthy. He felt that he could not rest unless he saw Urith again, and—so he explained his feeling—told her more fully the circumstances of the previous night's adventure, and heard from her own lips that her mother was not seriously injured in health by the distress he had caused her, and that she, Urith, forgave him.

His imagination worked. He had not been explicit enough when he came to Willsworthy. The fainting fit of the mother had interrupted his explanation. After that he had forgotten to say what he had intended to say, and what ought to have been said. When he was gone, Urith would consider it strange that he had been so curt and reserved, she would hear her Uncle Solomon's stories, tinged with rum punch past recognition of where truth shaded into fiction.

Moreover, he felt a craving for Urith's sympathy; he wanted to acquaint her with what he had done to Fox Crymes before the story reached her embellished and enlarged. To his discredit it would be told, and might prejudice her against him. He must forestall gossip and tell her the truth himself.

So he rode in the direction of Willsworthy, but when he came near the place, an unusual diffidence stole over him—he did not dare to venture up to the house, and he hung about the vicinity in the road, then he went out on the moor, and it was when on the down that he thought he caught sight of her at some distance in the direction of the Cleave.

A labourer came by. "Who is that yonder?" he asked.

"I reckon any fool knows," answered the clown. "That be our young lady, Mistress Urith."

"Take my horse, fellow," said Anthony, and dismounted.

He went over the moor in pursuit of the girl, and found her seated on a rock with a foot swinging over the precipice. She was so startled when he spoke to her as almost to lose her balance. He caught her hand and she rose to her feet.

They stood on a ledge. Two towers of rock rose with a cleft between them like a window. The shelves of the granite were matted with whortleberry leaves, now all ranges of colour from green, through yellow to carmine, and with grey moss. A vein of porphyry penetrating the granite striped it with red, and Nature had tried her delicate pencil on the stone, staining or stippling it with her wondrously soft-toned lichenous paints. Below, at the depth of five hundred feet, the river roared over its red porphyry barrier, throwing into the air foam bubbles that were caught by the wind and carried up, and danced about and sported

with as are feathers by a wanton child. The great side of Stannon Down opposite, rising to sixteen hundred feet, was covered by flying shadows of forget-me-not blue and pale sulphurous gleams of sun. As the light glided over it, it picked out the strange clusters of old circular huts and enclosures, some with their doors and lintels unthrown down, that were inhabited by an unknown race before history began.

Anthony put his arm round Urith. "We stand," said he, "on the edge of a chasm, a step, a start, and one or other—perhaps both—fall into the abyss to sheer destruction. Let me hold you; I would not let you go—if you went, it would not be alone."

Urith did not answer; a trembling fit came on her. She stood, she felt, at the brink of another precipice than that before her eyes.

"I could not keep away," said Anthony. "I have got into trouble with every one, and I was afraid that you also would be set against me; so, after I had been to see about your father's grave, that all was right there—and Bessie had laid a garland of flowers on it—then I came back here. I thought I must see you and explain what I forgot to say this morning."

"You need say no more about that matter," answered Urith. "I told you at the time that I believed your word. You said you intended no ill. I am sure of that, quite sure. I know it is not in you to hurt."

"And yet I have hurt you and your mother, and also Fox Crymes." Then he told her how he had struck him, and that he was afraid he had seriously injured his eye.

"And you have brought back the gloves!" exclaimed Urith.

"Yes; here they are."

"You have not fulfilled my commission?"

"I will do it if you wish it; I have not done it yet. I was going to give Fox the gloves; I did not desire to see Julian. You must understand that my father has been speaking to me to-day about Julian—it seems he has set his mind on making a pair of us. I do not know what Julian thinks, but I know my own mind, that this is not to my taste. After he had spoken to me about her, I could not go on direct to her house and see her. My father would think that I gave in to him, and—I should have been uneasy myself."

Urith said nothing, she was looking down at the tossing, thundering torrent far below.

"I never cared much for Julian," continued Anthony, "and after yesterday I like her less."

"Why so?" Urith looked up and met his eyes.

"Why so? Because I have seen you. If I have to go through life with any one, I will take you in the saddle behind me—no one else."

Urith trembled more than before; a convulsive, irrepressible emotion had come over her. Sometimes it happens when the heavens are opened with a sudden flare of near and dazzling lightning that those who have looked up have been struck with blindness. So was it now; Urith had seen a heaven of happiness, a glory of love—a new and wondrous world open before her, such as she had never dreamt of, of which no foretaste had ever been accorded her, and it left her speechless, with a cloud before her eyes, and giddy, so that she held out her hands gropingly to catch the rock; it was unnecessary, the strong arm of Anthony held her from falling.

The young man paused for an answer.

"Well!" said he. "Have you no word?"

None; she moved her lips, she could not speak.

"Come," said he, after another pause, "they who ride pillion ride thus—the man has his leather belt, and to that the woman holds. Urith, if we are to ride together on life's road, lay hold of my belt."

She held out her hands still, gropingly.

"Stay!" she said, suddenly recovering herself with a start. "You forget; you do not know me. Look at my hands, they are still torn; I did that in one of my fits of rage. Do you not fear to take me when I go, when crossed, into such mad passion as these hands show?"

Anthony laughed. "I fear! I!"

Then she put her right hand to lay hold of his girdle, but caught and drew out the gloves.

"I have these again!" she exclaimed. "Even these gloves cast at me in defiance. Well, it matters not now. I refused to take them up, yet I could not shake them off; now I take them and keep them. I accept the challenge." She grasped him firmly by the girdle, and with the other hand thrust the gloves into her bosom.

"I do not understand you," said Anthony.

"There is no need that you should."

Then he caught her up in his arms, with a shout of exultation, and held her for a moment hanging over the awful gulf beneath.

She looked him steadily in the eyes. She doubted neither his strength to hold her, nor his love.

Then he drew her to him and kissed her.

It is said that the sun dances on Easter Day in the morning. It was noon now, but the sun danced over Urith and Anthony.

"And now," said the latter, "about your mother. Will she give her consent?"

"And your father?" asked Urith.

"Oh, my father!" repeated Anthony, scornfully, "whatsoever I will, that he is content with. As to your mother——"

"I know what I will do," said Urith; "Luke has great influence with her. I will tell him all, and get him to ask her to agree and bless us. Luke will do anything I ask of him."

CHAPTER XV.

FATHER AND SON.

When Anthony came home, he found that his father had been waiting supper awhile for him, and then as he did not arrive, had ordered it in, and partaken of the meal.

The old man's humour was not pleasant. He had been over that afternoon to Kilworthy, and had heard of his son's act of recklessness. Fears were entertained for Fox's sight in one eye. He was ordered to have the eye bandaged, and to be kept in the dark.

When Anthony entered the room where was his father, the old man looked up at him from the table strewn with the remains of his meal, and said, roughly, "I expect regular hours kept in my house. Why were you not here at the proper time? About any new folly or violence?"

Anthony did not answer, but seated himself at the table.

"I have been to Kilworthy," said the old man, "I have heard there of your conduct."

"Fox insulted me. You would not have me endure an insult tamely?" His father's tone nettled the young man.

"Certainly not; but men pink each other with rapiers, instead of striking with lace tags."

"This is the first time that any one has let fall that I am not a man," said Anthony.

There was always a certain roughness, a lack of amiability in the behaviour of father to son and son to father, not arising out of lack of affection, but that the old man was by nature coarse-grained, and he delighted in seeing his son blunt and brusque. He—young Tony—was no milksop, he was proud to say. He was a lad who could hold his own against any one, and fight his way through the world. The old man was gratified at the swagger and independence of the youth, and at every proof he gave of rude and overbearing self-esteem. But he was not pleased at the brawl with Fox Crymes; it was undignified for one thing, and it caused a breach where he wished to

see union. It threw an impediment in the way of the execution of a darling scheme, a scheme on which his heart had been set for twenty years.

"I do not know what it was about," said the father, "more than that I had heard you had been squabbling in an alehouse about some girl."

"The insult or impertinence was levelled at me," said Anthony, controlling himself; "I did not mean to injure Fox, on that you may rely. I struck him over the face because he had whipped me into anger which I could not contain. I am sorry if I have hurt his eye. I am not sorry for having struck him, he brought it on himself."

"It is not creditable," pursued old Cleverdon, "that your name should be brought into men's mouths about a vulgar brawl over some village wench."

The blood surged into Anthony's face, he laid down his knife and looked steadily across the table at his father.

"On that score," said he, "you may set your mind at rest. There has been no brawl over any village wench."

"I can quite understand," said the father, "that Fox Crymes was jealous and did not

measure words. He can pepper and spice his speeches till they burn as cantharides. What is he beside you? If you cast a fancy here or there, and there be naught serious in it, and it interferes with his sport, he must bear it. But, Tony, it is high time you were married. We must have no more of these wrangles. Whose name came up between you? Was it his sister's? I can well understand he does not relish her marriage. There has ever been rough water between them. She has the property, and when old Justice Crymes dies—where will he be? Was that the occasion of the dispute?"

"No, father, it was not."

"Then it was not about Julian?"

"About Julian? Certainly not."

"Nor about some village girl?"

"Nor about any village girl, as I have said."

"Then what was it about? or rather, about whom was it?"

"There is no reason why you should not know," answered Anthony, with coolness, "though that is a side matter. Fox told me that a suitable ornament for my cap was a coxcomb. That is why I struck him."

The old man laughed out. "You did well to chastise him for that."

"As you asked what girl's name was brought up, I will tell you," said Anthony. "It was that of Urith Malvine."

"Urith Malvine!" scoffed old Cleverdon, his eyes twinkling malevolently. "Not surprised at that light hussy bringing herself into men's mouths in a tavern."

"Father!" exclaimed the young man, "not a word against her. I will not bear that from you or from any man."

"You will not bear it!" almost screamed old Anthony. "You—you! make yourself champion of a beggar brat like that?"

"Did you hear my words?" said the young man, standing up. "No one—not even you—shall speak against her. It was because Fox sneered at her that I struck him; he might have scoffed at me and I would have passed that over."

"And you threaten me? You will knock out my eye with your tags?"

"I merely warn you, father, that I will not suffer her name to be improperly used. I cannot raise my hand against you, but I will leave the room."

"It is high time you were married. By

the Lord ! you shall be married. I will not be rasped like this."

"I will marry when I see fit," said Anthony.

"The fitness is now," retorted the father. "When a young gallant begins to squabble at village mug-houses about——"

"Father ?"

"The time is ripe. I will see Squire Crymes about it to-morrow."

"I am not going to take Julian Crymes."

"You shall take whom I choose."

"I am to marry—not you, father; accordingly, the choice lies with me."

"You cannot choose against my will."

"Can I not ? I can choose where I list."

"Anyhow, you cannot take where I do not allow. I will never allow of a wife to you who is not of good birth and rich."

"Of good birth she is—she whom I have chosen—rich she is not, but what matters that when I have enough ?"

"Are you mad ?" screamed the old man, springing from his chair, and running up and down the room, in wild excitement. "Are you mad ? Do you dare tell me you have chosen, without consulting me—without regard for my wishes ?"

"I shall take Urith, or none at all."

"Then none at all," snapped old Cleverdon. "Never, never will I consent to your bringing that hussy through my doors, under my roof."

"What harm has she done you? You have not heard a word against her. She is not rich, but not absolutely poor—she has, or will have, Willsworthy."

"Willsworthy! What is that compared with Julian's inheritance?"

"It is nothing. But I don't want Julian, I will not take her for the sake of her property. Come, father, sit down, and let us talk over this matter coolly and sensibly."

He threw himself into a chair, and laid his hands on the arms, and stretched his legs before him.

The Squire stopped, looked at his son, then staggered back to his chair as if he had been struck in the breast. He thought his son must have lost his wits. Why—he had not known this girl, this daughter of his most deadly enemy, more than a day, and already he was talking of making her his wife! And this, too, to the throwing over of his grand opportunity of uniting the Kilworthy property to Hall!

"Come, father, sit down, and keep cool. I am sorry if you prefer Julian to Urith, but unfortunately the selection has to be made, not by you, but by me, and I greatly prefer Urith to Julian. Indeed, I will not have the latter at any price—not if she inherited all the Abbey lands of Tavistock. You are disappointed, but you will get over it. When you come to know Urith you will like her; she has lost her father—and she will find one in you."

"Never!" gasped the old man; then with an oath, as he beat his fist on the table, "Never!"

Bessie heard that high words were being cast about in the supper-room, and she opened the door and came in with a candle, on the pretence that she desired to have the table cleared if her brother had done his meal.

"You may have all taken away," said Anthony. "My father has destroyed what appetite I had."

"Your appetite," stormed the old man, "is after most unwholesome diet; you turn from the rich acres to the starving peat-bog. By heaven! I will have you shut up in a madhouse along with your wench. I will

have a summons out against her at once. I will go to Fernando Crymes for it—it is sheer witchcraft. You have not seen her to speak to half-a-dozen times. You never came to know her at all till you had played the fool with her father's grave, and now ——. By Heaven, it is witchcraft! Folks have been burnt for lighter cases than this."

Bessie went over to her father, and put her arms round him, but he thrust her away. She looked appealingly to her brother, but Anthony did not catch her eye.

"I do not see what you have against Urith," said Anthony, after a long pause, during which the old man sat quivering with excitement, working his hands up and down on the arms of his chair, as though polishing them. "That she is not rich is no fault of hers. I have seen her often, and have now and then exchanged a word with her, though only yesterday came to see much of her, and have a long talk with her. I did her a great wrong by my desecration of her father's grave."

"Oh! you would make that good by marrying the daughter. Well, you have put out Fox's eye. Patch that up by marry-

ing his sister." The old man's voice shook with anger.

Anthony exercised unusual self-control. He knew that he had reached a point in his life when he must not act with rashness; he saw that his father's opposition was more serious than he had anticipated. Hitherto he had but to express a wish, and it was yielded to. Occasionally he had had differences with the old man, but had invariably, in the end, carried his own point. He did not doubt even now that finally his father would give way, but clearly not till after a battle of unusual violence; but it was one in which he was resolved not to yield. His passion for Urith was of sudden and also rapid growth, but was strong and sincere. Moreover, he had pledged himself to her, and could not draw back.

Bessie was resolved at all costs to divert the wrath of her father from Anthony, if possible to turn his thoughts into another channel; so she said, stooping to his ear,——

"Father; dear father! We met to-day our grandmother in the churchyard."

The old man looked inquiringly at her.

"Madame Penwarne," exclaimed Bessie.

He had forgotten for the moment that

she could have a grandmother on any other side than his own, and he knew that his mother was long dead.

"Yes, father," said Bessie. "And she says that Anthony is the living image of our dear, dear mother."

The old man turned his eyes slowly on his son. The light of the candle was on his face, bold, haughty, defiant, and wonderfully handsome. Yes! he was the very image of his mother, and that defiant smile he wore, he had inherited from her. The old man in a moment recalled many a wild scene of mutual reproach and stormy struggle. It was as though the dead woman's spirit had risen up against him to defy him once more, and to strike him to the heart.

Then Anthony said, "It is true, father. We both of us met her; and it is unfit that she should find a shelter elsewhere than in this house. Something must be done for her."

"Oh! you teach me my duty! She is naught to me."

"But to us she is. She is the mother of our mother," answered Anthony, looking straight into his father's eyes, and the old man lowered his; he felt the reproach in his son's words and glance.

Then he clenched his hands and teeth, and stood up, and wrung his hands together.

Presently, with a gasp, he said, "Because I married a beggar, is this mating with beggars to be a curse in the family from generation to generation, entailed from father to son. It shall not be; by heaven! it shall not be. You have had your own way too long, Anthony! I have borne with your whimsies, because they were harmless. Now you will wreck your own happiness, your honour, make yourself the laughing-stock of the country! I will save you from yourself. Do you hear me? I tried the sport, and it did not answer. I had wealth and she beauty, and beauty alone. It did not answer. We were cat and dog—your mother and I. Bessie knows it. She can bear me witness. I will not suffer this house to be made a hell of again."

"Father," said Anthony, "it was not that which caused you unhappiness—it was that you had interfered with the love of two who had given their hearts to each other."

Bessie threw herself between her father and brother. "Oh Anthony! Anthony!" she cried.

"You say that!" exclaimed the old man.

"I do—and now I warn you not to do the same thing. Urith and I love each other, and will have each other."

"I tell you I hate the girl—she shall never come here."

"Father," said Anthony—his pulses were beating like a thundering furious sea against cliffs, as a raging gale flinging itself against the moorland tors—"father, I see why it is that you are against Urith. You nourish against her the bitterness you felt against her father. You laughed and were pleased when I had dishonoured his grave. That surprised me. Now I understand all, and now I am forced to speak out the truth. You did a wrong in taking our mother away from him whom she loved, and then you ill-treated her when you had her in your power. You have nothing else against Urith—nothing. That she is poor is no crime."

Bessie clasped her arms about the old man. "Do not listen to him," she said. "He forgets his duty to you, only because he has been excited and wronged to-day." Then to her brother: "Anthony! do not forget that he is your father, to whom reverence is due."

Anthony remained silent for a couple of minutes, then he stood up from his chair, and went over to the old man. "I was wrong," he said. "I should not have spoken thus. Come, father, we have had little puffs between us, never such a bang as this. Let it be over; no more about the matter between us for a day or two, till we are both cool."

"I will make an end of this affair at once," said Squire Cleverdon. "What is the good of putting off what must be said?—of expecting a change which will never take place? You shall never—never obtain my consent. So give up the hussy, or you shall rue it."

"Nothing is gained, father, by threatening me. You must know that. I have made up my mind." He folded his arms on his breast.

"And so have I mine," answered old Cleverdon, folding his arms.

Father and son stood opposite each other, hard and fixed in their resolves—both men of indomitable, inflexible determination.

"Hear mine," said the Squire; "you give the creature up. Do you hear?"

"I hear and refuse. I will not, I cannot

give up Urith. I have pledged my word."

"And here I pledge mine!" shouted the old man.

"No—no, in pity, father! Oh, Anthony, leave the room!" pleaded Bessie, again interposing, but again ineffectually; her brother swept her aside, and refolded his arms, confronting his father.

"Say on!" he said, with his eyes fixed on the old man.

"I swear by all I hold sacred," exclaimed the father, "that I will never suffer that beggar-brat to cross my threshold. Now you know my resolution. As long as I am alive, she shall be kept from it by my arms, and I shall take care that she shall never rule here when I am gone. Now you know my mind, marry her or not as you please. That is my last word to you."

"Your last word to me!" repeated Anthony. He set his hat on his head, the hat in which hung the utterly withered marsh marigolds. "Very well; so be it." He walked to the door, passed through, and slammed it behind him.

CHAPTER XVI.

MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Luke Cleverdon walked slowly, with head bowed, towards Willsworthy. The day was not warm, a cold east wind was blowing down from the moor over the lowlands to the west, but his brow was beaded with large drops.

Anthony had come to him the night before, and had asked to be lodged. He had fallen out with his father, and refused to remain at Hall. Luke knew the reason. Anthony had told him. Anthony had told him more—that Urith was going to request his—Luke's—intercession with her mother.

Neither Anthony nor Urith had the least suspicion of the burden they were laying on the young man. It was his place, thought Anthony, to do what could be done to

further his—Anthony's—wishes. Luke was under an obligation to the family, and must make himself useful to it when required. That he should employ his mediation to obtain an end entirely opposed to the wishes of the old man who had housed and fed, and had educated him, did not strike Anthony as preposterous. For the moment, the interests, credit of the family were centred in the success of his own suit for Urith, his own will was the paramount law, which must be obeyed.

Urith thought of Luke as a friend and companion, very dear to her, but in quite another way from that in which she regarded Anthony. Luke had been to her a comrade in childhood, and she looked on him with the same childlike regard that she had given him when they were children; with her, this regard never ripened into a warmer feeling.

Anthony had slept soundly during the night. Care for the future, self-reproach, or self-questioning over the past had not troubled him. His father would come round. He had always given way hitherto. He had attempted bluster and threats, but the bluster was nothing, the threats would

never be carried out. In a day or two at the furthest the old man would come to the parsonage, ask to see him, and yield to his son's determination.

"I don't ask him to marry Urith," argued Anthony. "So there is no reason why he should lie on his back and kick and scratch. There is no sense in him. He will come round in time, and Bessie will do what she can for me."

But Luke had not slept. He was tortured with doubts, in addition to the inward conflicts with his heart. He asked himself, had he any right to interfere to promote this union, which was so strongly opposed by the father—so utterly distasteful to him? And, again, was it to the welfare of his cousin, and, above all, of Urith, that it should take place?

He knew the character of both Urith and Anthony. He was well aware how passionate at times, how sullen at others, she was wont to be. He attributed her sullenness to the nagging, teasing tongue, and stupid mismanagement of her mother, and the blunderheadedness of her uncle—interfering with her liberty where they should have allowed her freedom, crossing her in matters where

she should have been suffered to follow her own way, and letting her go wild in those directions in which she ought to have been curbed. He knew that this mismanagement had made her dogged and defiant.

He knew, also, how that his cousin, Anthony, had been pampered and flattered, till he thought himself much more than he was; did not know the value of money; was wilful, impetuous, and intolerant of opposition. Would not two such headstrong natures, when brought together, be as flint and steel? Moreover, Luke knew that Anthony had been regarded on all sides as the proper person to take Julian Crymes. It had been an open secret that such an arrangement was contemplated by the parents on both sides, and the young people had, in a measure, acquiesced in it. Anthony had shown Julian attentions which were only allowable on such an understanding. He may have meant nothing by them; nevertheless, they had been sufficiently marked to attract observation, and perhaps to lead the girl herself to conclude that his heart was touched, and that he only tarried a few years to enjoy his freedom before engaging himself.

But Luke was so sensitively conscientious that he feared his own jealousy of his cousin was prompting these suspicions and doubts; and he felt that his own heart was too perturbed for him at present to form a cool and independent survey of the situation.

As he expected and feared, so was it. Urith arrested him on the way up the hill to Willsworthy. She knew he would come to see her mother, and was on the look out for him. She asked him to plead her cause for her, and in his irresolution he accepted the office, against his better judgment, moved thereto by the thought that he was thus doing violence to his own heart, and most effectually trampling down and crushing under heel his own wishes, unformed though these wishes were.

Luke found Mistress Malvine in her bedroom. She had been greatly weakened by the fit on the previous morning, still more so by the exhaustion consequent on the visits of the afternoon. However ill and feeble she might be, her tongue retained its full activity, and so long as she could talk she was unconscious of her waning powers. In the tranquillity that

followed, when her acquaintances and sympathizers had withdrawn, great prostration ensued. But she had somewhat rallied on the following morning, and was quite ready to receive Luke Cleverdon when announced.

She was in her bed, and he was shocked to observe the change that had come over her. She held out her hand to him, "Ah, Master Luke!" she sighed, "I have need of comfort after what I have gone through; and I am grateful that you have come to see me. Whatever will become of my poor daughter when I am gone! I have been thinking and thinking, and wishing that it had pleased God you were her brother, that I might have entrusted her into your hands. You were here and saw how she went on and took sides with that Son of Belial, that Anthony, when he came concerning the grave of my dear husband. She has no heart, that child. I know she will be glad when I am gone, and will dance on my tomb. I have not spared her advice and counsel, nor have I ever let her go when I had my rebuke to administer under half an hour by the clock."

"Madam," said the young curate, "do

not now make boast of the amount of counsel and admonition you have administered; it is even possible that this may have been overdone, and may have had somewhat to do with the temper of your daughter. It is now a time for you to consider whether you are prepared, should it please God to call you——"

"Oh!" exclaimed Mrs. Malvine, "I am thankful to say I am always prepared. I have done my duty to my husband, to my brother, and my child. As for Urith, I have fed her full with my opinions on her conduct in every position and chance of life. My brother has, I am sure, also not to charge me with ever passing it over when he comes home drunk, or gets drunk off our cider, which is no easy matter, but it can be done with application. I have always, and at length, and with vehemence, told him what I think of his conduct."

"You must consider," said the curate, without allowing himself to be drawn aside into admiration for the good qualities of the sick woman, "you must consider, madam, not how much you have harangued and scolded others, but how much you deserve rebuke yourself."

"I have never spared myself, heaven knows! I have worked hard—I have worked harder than any slave. There are five large jars of last year's whortleberry jam still unopened in the storeroom. I can die happy, whenever I have to die, and not a sheet unhemmed, and we have twenty-four."

"There are other matters to think of," said Luke, gravely, "than whortleberry jam—five pots, sheets—twenty-four, rebuke of others—unmeasured, incalculable. You have to think of what you have left undone."

"There is nothing," interrupted the sick woman, "but a few ironmoulds in Solomon's shirts, which came of a nail in the washing-tray. I gave the woman who washed a good piece of my mind about that, because she ought to have seen the nail. But I'll get salt of lemon and take that out, if it please the Lord to raise me up again; at the same time, I'll turn that laundress away."

"It is by no means unlikely that heaven will not raise you up," said the curate, "and in your present condition, instead of thinking of dismissing servants for an over-

sight, you should consider whether you have never left undone those things which you ought to have done."

"I never have," answered the widow, with disdain, "except once. I ought to have had Solomon's dog Toby hung, but I was too good, too tender-hearted, and I did not. The dog scratched, and was swarming with fleas. Solomon never cared to have him kept clean, and I told him if he did not I would have Toby hung, but I did not. I have, I admit, this on my conscience. But, Lord! you are not comforting me at all, and a minister of the Word should pour the balm of Gilead into the wounds of the sick. Now, if you would have Urith up and give her a good reprimand, and Solomon also, and if you would hang that dog —that would be a comfort to my soul, and I could die in peace."

"With your complaint, Mistress Malvine, you must be ready to die at any moment—whether in a true or false peace depends on your preparation. I am not here to lecture your brother and daughter, and hang a dog because it has fleas, but to bid you search and examine your conscience, and see whether there be not therein inordinate

self-esteem, and whether you have not encouraged the censorious spirit within you till you have become blind to all your own defects in your eagerness to pull motes out of the eyes of others."

"There! bless me!" exclaimed the widow. "Did you hear that? The soot has fallen down the chimney. I told Solomon to have the chimney swept, and, as usual, he has neglected to see to it. I'll send for him and tell him what I think; perhaps," she added, in a querulous tone, "when he considers that the words come from a dying sister he may be more considerate in future, and have chimneys swept regularly."

"I have," said the young curate, "one question on which I require an answer. Are you in charity with all the world? Do you forgive all those who have trespassed against you?"

"I am the most amiable person in the world, that is why I am so imposed on, and Solomon, and Urith, and the maids, and the men take such advantage of me. There is that dog, under the bed, scratching. I hear it, I feel it. Do, prithee, Master Luke, take the tongs and go under the bed after

it. How can I have peace and rest whilst Toby is under the bed, and I know the state his hair is in?"

"You say you are on terms of charity with all the world. I conclude that you from your heart forgive my cousin Anthony his unconsidered act on St. Mark's Eve."

"What!" exclaimed the sick woman, striving to rise in her bed, "I forgive him that — never — no, so help me Heaven, never."

"So help you Heaven!" said Luke, starting up, and answering in an authoritative tone, whilst zeal-inspired wrath flushed his pale face. "So help you Heaven, do you dare to say, you foolish woman! Heaven will help to forgive, never help to harbour an unforgiving spirit. If you do not pardon such a trespass, committed unintentionally, you will not be forgiven yours."

"I have none—none to signify, that I have not settled with Heaven long ago," said the widow peevishly. "I wish, Master Luke, you would not worry me. I need comfort, not to be vexed on my death-bed."

"I ask you to forgive Anthony, will you do so?"

She turned her face away.

"Now listen to me, madam. He has fallen into disgrace with his father. He has had to leave his home, and his father will have no word with him."

"I rejoice to hear it."

"And the reason is this—the young man loves your daughter Urith." He paused, and wiped his brow.

The widow turned her face round, full of quickened attention.

"That he did not purpose a dishonour to the grave you may be assured, when you know that he seeks the hand of Urith. How could one who loves think to advance his suit by an outrage on the father's memory? It was an accident, an accident he deplores most heartily. He will make what amends he can. Give him your daughter, and then he will have the right of a son-in-law to erect a handsome and suitable tomb to your husband, and his father."

As he spoke, he heard the steps creak, Urith was ascending the stairs, coming to her mother, to throw herself on her knees at her side, clasp her hand, and add her entreaties to those of Luke Cleverdon.

"Help me up!" said Mrs. Malvine.

Then the curate put his arm to her, and raised her into a sitting position. Her face had altered its expression from peevishness to anger. It was grey, with a green tinge about the nose and lips, the lines from the nostrils to the chin were deep and dark. Her eyes had a hard, threatening, metallic glimmer in them.

At that moment Urith appeared in the doorway. Luke stood, with his hand to his chin, and head bowed, looking at the woman.

"You are here, Urith!" said she, holding out her hands towards her spread out. "You have dared—dared to love the man who has dishonoured your father's grave. You have come here to ask me to sanction and bless this love." She gasped for breath. Her face was livid, haggard; but her dark eyes were literally blazing—shooting out deadly-cold glares of hate. The sweat-drops ran off her brow and dropped upon the sheet. The lips were drawn from the teeth. There was in her appearance something of unearthly horror. "You shall never—never obtain from me what you want. If you have any respect for your

father's name—any love lingering in your heart for the mother that bore you—you will shake him off, and never speak to him again." She remained panting, and gulping, and shivering. So violent was her emotion that it suffocated her.

"I know," she continued, in a lower tone, and with her hands flat on the coverlet before her, "what you do not—how my life has been turned to wormwood. His mother stood between me and my happiness—between me and your father's heart; and, after what I have endured, shall I forgive that? Aye, and a double injury—the wrong done by Margaret Penwarne's son to my husband's grave?—Never!"

She began to move herself in bed, as though trying to scramble up into a standing posture, and again her hand was threateningly extended. "Never—never shall this come about. Urith! I charge you——"

The girl, alarmed, ran towards her mother. The old woman warned her back. "What! will you do violence to me to stay my words? Will you throttle me to prevent them from coming out of my lips?"

Again she made an effort to rise, and scrambled to her knees: "I pray heaven, if

he dares to enter my doors, that he may be struck down on my hearth—lifeless!"

She gave a gasp, shivered, and fell back on the bed.

She was dead.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE COUSINS.

Some days passed. Mistress Malvine had been buried. No direct communication had taken place between Anthony and his father. The gentle Bessie, full of distress at the breach, had done what she could to heal it; but ineffectually. Each was too proud and obstinate to make the first advance. Bessie's influence with her father was of the slightest—he had never showed love towards his plain daughter; and Anthony was too much of a man, in his own idea, to allow himself to be guided by a woman. Luke was perplexed more than ever. Urith was now left wholly without proper protection. Her uncle was worse than useless—an element of disorder in the household, and of disintegration in the pecuniary

affairs of the family. The estate of Willsworthy did not come to him. It had belonged to his mother, and from his mother had gone to his sister, and now passed to his niece. It was a manor that seemed doomed to follow the spindle. But, though it had not become his property, he was trustee and guardian for his niece till she married; and a more unsatisfactory trustee or improper guardian could hardly have been chosen. He was, indeed, an amiable, well-intentioned man; but was weak, and over-fond of conviviality and the society of his social inferiors, from whom alone he met with deference. He had been brought up to the profession of the law; but, on his father's death, had thrown up what little work had come to him that he might be with his mother and sister, as manager of the estate. When his sister married Richard Malvine he was again thrown on his own resources, and lived mainly on subventions from his sister and friends, and a little law-business that he picked up and mismanaged, till his brother-in-law died, when he returned to Willsworthy to the mismanagement of that property which Richard Malvine had barely

recovered from the disorder and deterioration into which it had been brought by Solomon Gibbs's previous rule. The old fellow was unable to stick to any sort of work, to concentrate his thoughts for ten minutes on any object, was irresolute, and swayed by those with whom he associated. His sister lectured and scolded him, and he bore her rebukes with placid amiability, and promises of amendment; promises that were never fulfilled. One great source of annoyance to his sister was his readiness to talk over all family matters at the tavern with his drinking comrades, to explain his views as to what was to be done in every contingency, and dilate on the pecuniary difficulties of his sister, and his schemes for the remedy of the daily deepening impecuniosity. This public discussion of the affairs of the family had done much to bring it into disrepute. Those who heard Mr. Gibbs over his cups retailed what they heard to their friends and wives with developments of their own, and the whole neighbourhood had come to believe that the Malvines were a family irretrievably lost, and that Willsworthy was a poor and intractable estate. Those who used their

eyes—as Crymes—did not share in this latter opinion, they saw that the property was deteriorated by mismanagement, but they all readily accepted the opinion that bankruptcy was inevitable to the possessors at that time of Willsworthy.

Luke Cleverdon, knowing all the circumstances, and having gauged the character and abilities of Solomon Gibbs, was anxious concerning the future of Urith. She had tendered a dubious, sullen, and irregular submission to her mother, but was not likely to endure the capricious, unintelligent domination of her uncle. His sister had, moreover, exercised a very considerable restraint over Solomon. He lived always in wholesome dread of her tongue; when relieved of every restraint, there was no reckoning on what he might do with the money scraped together. Urith herself was unaccustomed to managing a house. Her mother had been an admirable disciplinarian in the house, had kept everything there in order, and Urith had run wild. Her mother had not attempted to join her with herself in domestic management, and had driven the girl into a chronic condition of repressed revolt by her unceasing fault-

finding. The girl had kept herself outside the house, had spent her time on the moors to escape the irritation and rebellion provoked by her mother's tongue.

The only tolerable solution would have been for Luke to have made Urith his wife, and taken on himself the management of the property, but such a solution was now impossible, for Urith's heart was engaged. It had never been a possibility to Luke's imagination, for he had sufficient cool judgment to be quite sure that he and Urith would never agree. He was quiet, reserved, devoted to his books or to antiquarian researches on the moor, and she had an intractable spirit—at one time sullen, at another frantic—with which he could not cope.

Besides this uncongeniality of temperament, he had no knowledge of or taste for agricultural pursuits, and to recover Willsworthy a man was needed who was a practical farmer and acquainted with business. If he were, moreover, to live at Willsworthy and devote himself to the estate, he must abandon his sacred calling, and this Luke could not justify to his conscience. The choice of Urith, fallen on

Anthony, was unobjectionable as far as suitability for the place went. Anthony had been reared on a farm, and was familiar with all that pertained to agriculture. He had energy, spirit, and judgment. But the strong, unreasoning opposition of old Squire Cleverdon, and the refusal of Urith's mother to consent to it, made Luke resolve to do nothing to further the union.

Luke spoke to Anthony on the matter, but was met with airy assurance. The old man must come round, it was but a matter of time, and as Mistress Malvine was but recently dead, it could not be that the daughter would marry at once. There must ensue delay, and during this delay old Cleverdon would gradually accustom himself to the prospect, and his anger cool.

Time passed, and no tokens of yielding on the part of the father appeared. Luke spoke again to his cousin. Now Anthony's tone was somewhat altered. His father was holding out because he believed that by so doing he would prevent the marriage, but he was certain to relent as soon as the irrevocable step had been taken. Just as David mourned and wept as long as the child was sick, but washed his face and ate

and accommodated himself to the situation when the child was dead, so would it be with the Squire. He would sulk and threaten so long as Anthony was meditating matrimony, but no sooner was he married, than the old man would ask them all to dinner, kiss, and be jolly.

Luke by no means shared his cousin's sanguine views. Mistress Penwarne was in the house, and from her he learnt the circumstances of the marriage and subsequent disagreement of old Anthony and Margaret; and he could to some extent understand the dislike the old Squire entertained towards his son's marrying the daughter of his rival. He knew the hard, relentless, envious nature of the man, he had suffered from it himself, and he doubted whether it would yield as young Anthony anticipated. It was true that Anthony was the Squire's son and heir, that he was the keystone to the great triumphal Cleverdon arch the old man had been rearing in imagination, it was certain that there would be a struggle in his heart between his pride and his love. Luke was by no means confident that old Cleverdon's affection for his son would prove so mastering a passion as to overcome

the many combined emotions which were in insurrection within him against this union, impelling him to maintain his attitude towards his son of alienation and hostility.

When Luke spoke to Anthony of the difficulties that stood in his way, Anthony burst forth impatiently with the words, "It is of no use you talking to me like this, cousin. I have made up my mind, I will have Urith as my wife. I love her, and she loves me. What does it matter that there are obstacles? Obstacles have to be surmounted. My father will come round. As to Urith's mother; the old woman was prejudiced, she was angry. She knows better now, and is sorry for what she said."

"How do you know that?"

"Oh! of course it is so."

"But do you suppose that Urith will go in opposition to her mother's dying wish?"

"She will make no trouble over that, I reckon. Words are wind—they break no bones. I appeal from Alexander drunk to Alexander sober, from the ill-informed and peppery old woman, half-crazed on her death-bed, to the same in her present condition. Will that content you?"

"You have not spoken to Urith on this matter?"

"No; I have not seen her since the funeral. I have had that much grace in me. But I will see her to-day, I swear to you. I will tell you what I think," said Anthony, with vehemence. "You are as cold-blooded as an eel. You have never loved—all your interest is in old stones, and pots and pans dug up out of cairns. You love them in a frozen fashion, and have no notion what is the ardour of human hearts loving each other. So you heap one difficulty on another. Why, Cousin Luke, if there were mountains of ice I would climb over them, seas of fire, I would wade through them, to Urith. Neither heaven nor hell shall separate us."

"Do not speak like this," said the curate, sternly. "It is a tempting of Providence."

"Providence brought us together and set us ablaze. Providence is bound to finish the good work and unite us."

"There has been neither consideration nor delay in this matter, and Providence, may be, raises these barriers against which you kick."

"I will kick them over," said Anthony.

"Yes," said Luke, with a touch of bitterness; "always acting with passion and inconsideration. Nothing but headlong folly would have led you to do violence to Master Malvine's grave. The same rash impetuosity made you injure Fox Crymes' eye; and now you will throw yourself headlong into a state of life which involves the welfare of another, just because you have a fancy in your head that may pass as quickly as it has arisen."

"I am not going to listen to a sermon. This is not Sunday."

"I do not believe you will make Urith happy."

"No; not in the fashion you esteem happiness. Certainly not in that. In grubbing into barrows after old pots and counting grey stones on the moor. No. Urith would gape and go to sleep over such dull happiness as this. But I and she understand happiness in other sort from you. We shall manage somehow to make each other happy, and I defy my father and the ghost of old Madam Malvine to stand between us and spoil our bliss."

Luke bowed his head over the table, and put his hand before his eyes, that his cousin

might not observe the emotion that stirred him at these cutting but thoughtlessly uttered words of his cousin. He did not answer at once. After some pause he said, without looking up, "Yes, you may be happy together after your fashion, but something more than passion is wanted to found a household, and that is, as Scripture tells us, the blessing of the parents."

"My father is all right," said Anthony. "He has set his head on my uniting Kilworthy to Hall, and trebling the family estate. He can't have that, so he is growling. But Urith does not come empty; she has Willsworthy. If we do not extend the kingdom of Cleverdon in one direction, we shall in another. My father will see that in time, and come round. The weathercock does not always point to the east; we shall have a twist about, a few rains, and a soft west, warm breeze of reconciliation. I will make you a bet—what will you take?"

"I take no bets; I ask you to consider. In marriage each side brings something to the common fund. What do you bring? Urith has Willsworthy."

"And I Hall."

"No; recollect your father's threat."

"It was but a threat—he never meant it."

"Suppose he did mean it, and perseveres; you will then have to be the receiver, not the giver."

"The place is gone to the dogs. I can give my arms and head to it, and bring it round from the kennel."

"That is something, certainly. Then, again, you are wilful, and have had your way in all things. How will you agree with a girl equally wilful and unbending?"

"In the best way; we shall both will the same things. You don't understand what love is. Where two young creatures love, they do not strive, they pull together. It is of no profit talking to you, Luke, about love; it is to you what Hebrew or Greek would be to me—an unintelligible language in unreadable characters. I will be off to see Urith at once."

"No," said Luke, "you must not go to Willsworthy; you will cause folk to talk."

"I care nothing for their talk."

"If you care nothing for what people say, how is it that you fell out with, and struck Fox? You must consider others

beside yourself. You have no right to bring the name of Urith into discredit. Do you not suppose that already tongues are busy concerning the cause of your quarrel with your father?"

"But I must see her, and come to some understanding."

"I will go to Willsworthy at once, and speak to her of your matter. I have not done so hitherto—I have only sought to comfort her on the death of her mother."

"I do not desire a go-between," said Anthony, peevishly. "In these concerns none can act like the principals."

"But I cannot suffer you to go. You must think of Urith's good name, and not have that any more put into the mouths of those who go to the pothouse. It has been done more than enough already. Stay here till I return."

Luke took up his three-corner hat and his stick and went forth. On reaching Willsworthy he did not find Urith in the house, but ascertained from a maidservant that she was in the walled garden. Thither he betook himself across the back courtyard. The rooks were making a great noise in the sycamores outside.

He found the girl seated on the herb-bank in the neglected garden, with her head on her hand, deep in thought. She was pale, and her face drawn; but the moment she saw Luke she started up and flushed.

"I am so glad you are come. You will tell me something about Anthony?"

She was only glad to see him because he would speak of Anthony, thought Luke; and it gave a pang to his heart.

"Yes," said he, taking a seat beside her, "I will speak to you about Anthony."

She looked him full in the face out of her large, earnest, dark eyes. "Is it true," she asked, "what I have been told, that he has fallen out with his father, and is driven from Hall?"

"He has taken himself off from Hall," answered Luke, "on your account. His father refuses to countenance his attachment to you."

"Then where is he? With you?"

"Yes, with me. I have come to know your mind. He cannot always remain with me and at variance with his father."

"On my account this has happened?" she said.

"Yes, on your account. How is this to end?"

She put her hands to her brow, and pressed her temples. "I am pulled this way and that," she answered, "and I feel as if I should go mad. But I have made my resolve. I will give him up. I have been an undutiful daughter always, and now I will obey my mother's last wishes. In that one thing that will cost me most, I will submit, and so atone for the wrong I did all the years before."

"Then you determine to give up Anthony, wholly?"

The colour came and went in her cheek, then deserted it entirely. She clasped her hands over her knee—she had re-seated herself—and she said in a low voice, "Wholly."

"You give me authority to tell him this?"

"Yes. It can never be that we should belong to each other after what my mother said. You heard. She hoped if he ever passed through this door, that he might be struck dead on the hearth."

"They were awful words," said Luke, "but——"

"They were her last words."

Luke returned to his home and found Anthony there, pacing his little parlour, to work off his impatience. When he heard what Luke had to say, he burst into angry reproach. "You have spoken like a parson! It was wrong for you to meddle, I knew no good would come of it! I will not hear of this! I will go to Urith myself!"

"You must not."

"I will! Nothing shall stay me." He caught up his hat and swung out of the room.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

ANTHONY strode along the way to Willsworthy. That way took him past Cudlip Town. The landlord was at the door of his inn.

"What! pass my house without a step inside?" asked he. "There's Master Sol Gibbs there and Moorman Ever."

"I cannot stay," answered Anthony.

"Oh!" laughed the taverner, "I see;" and he began to whistle a country song—"An evening so clear."

Instantly the strains of a viol-de-gamba were heard from within taking up the strain, and Uncle Solomon's voice singing lustily:

An evening so clear
  I would that I were,
To kiss thy soft cheek
  With the faintest of air.

The star that is shining
So brightly above,
I would that I were
To enlighten my love.

Anthony walked on. His brow knitted, and he set his teeth. The innkeeper had guessed that he was going to Willsworthy, and suspected the reason. That idiot Solomon Gibbs had been talking.

As he strode along, the plaintive and sweet melody followed him; all that was harsh in the voice mellowed by the distance; and Anthony sang to himself low, as he continued his course:

I would I were heaven,
O'erarching and blue,
I'd bathe thee, my dearest,
In the freshest of dew.
I would I the sun were,
All radiance and glow.
I'd pour all my splendour
On thee, love, below!

He remembered how—only a few weeks agone when he had been at the tavern with some comrades, and songs had been called for, he had expressed his impatience at this very piece, which he said was rank folly.

Then he had not understood the yearning of the heart for the loved one, had not conceived of the desire to be all and everything to its mistress. Now he was expelled from his father's house, threatened with being disinherited, and was actually without money in his pocket wherewith to pay for ale or wine at the tavern, had he entered it. He who had been so free with his coin, so ready to treat others, was now unable to give himself a mug of ale. That was what had driven him past the tavern door without crossing the threshold, or rather that was one reason why he had resisted the invitation of the host. Yes; he had suffered for Urith, and he rather plumed himself on having done so. She could not resist his appeal when he told her all he had risked for her sake.

Besides, Anthony was stubborn. The fact of his father's resistance to his wish had hammered his resolution into inflexibility. Nothing in the world, no person alive or dead—neither his father nor her mother—should interfere to frustrate his will. Anthony's heart beat fast between anger and impatience to break down every obstacle; he sang on, as he walked:

If I were the waters
  That round the world run,
I'd lavish my pearls on thee,
  Not keeping of one.
If I were the summer,
  My flowers and green
I'd heap on thy temples,
  And crown thee my Queen

He had reached the ascent to Willsworthy, he looked up the lane and saw Urith in it; outside the entrance gates to the Manor House. She was there looking for her uncle, who had been required about some farm-business. She saw Anthony coming to her, with the sun glistening on him over the rude stone hedge hung with fern. She heard his song, and she knew the words—she knew that he was applying them to her. For a moment she hesitated, whether to meet him or to retire into the house. She speedily formed her resolution. If there must be an interview, a final interview, it had better be at once, and got over.

The evening sun was low, the moor peaks over the Manor House were flushed a delicate pink, as though the heather were in bloom. Alas! this year no heather would wrap the

hills in rose flush, for it had been burnt in the great fire. High aloft the larks were shrilling. She could hear their song in broken snatches between the strophes of Anthony's lay as he ascended the hill. He had seen her, and his voice became loud and jubilant :

> If I were a kiln,
> All fire and flame,
> I'd mantle and girdle thee
> Round with the same.
> But as I am nothing
> Save love-mazèd Bill,
> Pray take of me, make of me,
> Just what you will.

He had reached her. He held out his arms to engirdle her as he had threatened, and the flame leaped and danced in his eyes and glowed in his lips and cheek.

She drew back proudly.

"You have had my message."

"I take no messages—certainly none sent through parsons. The dove is the carrier between lovers, and not the croaking raven."

"Perhaps it is as well," said Urith, coldly. She had nerved herself to play her part, but her heart was bounding and beat-

ing against her sides like the Tavy in one of its granite pools beneath a cataract. "I sent by Master Luke Cleverdon to let you know that we must see each other no more."

"I will take no such message. I will—I must see you. I cannot live without."

"My mother's wishes must be followed. I have promised to see and speak to you no more."

"You promised! To whom? To her?"

Urith was silent.

"I will know who twisted this promise out of you. Was it Luke? If so his cassock and our cousinship shall not save him."

"It was not Luke."

"It was your mother?"

"I did not actually promise anything to my mother. But—I must not shrink from telling you—I have made the promise to myself, we can be nothing to each other."

"Unsay the promise at once—do you hear? At once."

"I cannot do that. I made it because I considered it right. Your father is against our—acquaintance——" She hesitated.

"Speak out—he is against our being lovers, and more against our marrying. But what

of that? He always gives way in the end, and now the only means of bringing him to his senses is for us to go before the altar."

"My mother with her last breath warned me from you."

"I know perfectly well for what reason. My mother and your father were to each other what you and I are now; then, by some chance, all went wrong, and each got wed to the wrong person. Neither was happy after that, and my father on one side and your mother on the other, could not forget this, so they have carried on the grudge to the next generation, and would make us do the wrong that they did, and give you to —the Lord knows who!—perhaps, Fox Crymes; and me, certainly, to Julian. I have seen what comes of wedding where the heart is elsewhere. I will not commit the folly my father was guilty of. Julian Crymes shall take another, she shall never have me. And you, I reckon, have no fancy for another save me; and if your mother had made any scheme for you, she has taken it with her to the grave, and you are not tied to make yourself unhappy thereon."

As he spoke, Urith retreated through the

gateway into the court, and Anthony, vehement in his purpose, followed her.

They were as much alone and unobserved in the little court as in the lane, for only the hall windows and those of an unused parlour looked into it. But Anthony raised his voice in his warmth of feeling. "Urith," said he, "I am not accustomed to take a No, and what I am not accustomed to I will not take."

"No!" she answered, and looked up, with a kindling of her eye. "And what I say, to that I am accustomed to hold; and what I am accustomed to hold, that hold I will. I say No." She set her foot down.

"And I will not take it. I throw it back. Why, look you, you have said Yes. We are pledged to each other. You and I on the Cleave. There I have you, Urith. You passed your word to me and I will not release you."

She looked on the paved ground of the court, with grass sprouting between the cobble-stones, and played with her foot on the pebbles. Her brows were contracted, and her lips tight closed. Presently she looked up at him steadily, and said—

"It is for the good of both that I withdraw that word, stolen from me before I had weighed and appraised its worth. I will not be the cause of strife between you and your father, and I dare not go against the last words of my mother. Do you know what she said? She prayed that you might be struck dead on the hearth should you dare to enter our doors again."

"Very well," said Anthony, "let us see what her prayer avails. Stand aside, Urith."

He thrust her away and walked forward to the entrance of the house, then he turned and looked at her and laughed. The sun shone on the porch, but it was dark within. He put out his hands and held to the stone jambs, and looking at Urith with the dazzling evening sun in his eyes, he said—

"See now! I defy her. I go through!" and walking backwards, with arms outspread, he passed in through the porch, then in at the second doorway.

Urith had remained rooted to one spot, in astonishment and terror. Now she flew after him, and found him standing in the hall on the hearthstone, his head above the

dark oak mantel, laughing, and with his legs wide apart, and his hands in his belt.

"See, Urith," he jeered, "the prayers are of no avail. Prayers bring blessings, not curses. Here am I on the hearthstone alive and well. Now—will you fear an idle threat?"

He laughed aloud, and broke out into a snatch of song:

> If I were a kiln
> All fire and flame,
> I'd mantle and girdle thee
> Round with the same.

Then he caught her round the waist and drew her towards him; but by a sharp turn she freed herself from his grasp.

"No," she said, "one must give way, and that shall not be I."

"Nor I," he said, resolutely, and the blood rose in his cheeks; I am wholly unwont to give way."

"So am I."

"Then it is—which is strongest."

"Strongest in will—even so; there I doubt if you will surpass me."

"I tell you this is folly, mad folly," said Anthony, with violence: "my happiness—

my everything depends on you. I have broken with my father. I am too proud to go back to Hall and say to him, 'Urith has cast me off, now that she finds I am penniless.' What am I to do? I cannot dig, to beg I am ashamed, and I have no stewardship in which to be dishonest. If I cannot have you, I have nothing to live for, nothing to work for, nothing and no one to love." He stamped on the hearthstone. "By heaven, may I be struck dead here if only I get you, for without you I will not live. Let it be as your mother wished, so that I have you."

She remained silent, with hands clasped, looking down—her face set, colourless, and resolved with a certain dogged, sullen fixity.

"Am I to be the laughing-stock of the parish?" asked Anthony, angrily. "Turned out of Hall, turned out of Willsworthy! My father will have naught to do with me because of Urith Malvine, and Urith Malvine will have naught to say to me because of Squire Cleverdon. This is too laughable—it would be laughable if it concerned another than me—but I am the sufferer, I am the ball tossed about and let drop by every hand. I will not be thus

treated. I will not be the generally rejected. You must and you shall take me."

"Listen to me, Anthony," said Urith, in tones that hardly vibrated, so complete was her self-control. "If you will not ask your father's pardon——"

"What for? I have done him no harm."

"Well, then, if you will not, go to your father and say that I will not take you, and therefore all is to be as before."

"No, that I will not do; I will have you even against your will. You may give me up, but I will not so lightly let you fall."

"Hear me out. If you will not do this, go away from this place."

"Whither?"

"Nay, that is for you to decide. I should say, were I a man, that I could always find a where—in the King's army."

Anthony laughed scornfully. "In the King's forces, that on the accession of the Duke of York will be employed to put down the Protestants, and treat them as they have been treated in Savoy and in France? No, Urith, not at your wish will I do that; but if the Duke of Monmouth or the Prince of Orange were——"

Urith held up her hand. In at the door came her uncle, red and wine-flushed, carrying his viol.

"Halloo!" shouted Mr. Solomon Gibbs, "*in vino veritas.* Hussey, you don't understand Latin. I have learnt something—slipped out unawares from Moorman Ever. To-morrow—what think you? A Drift."

"A Drift!" For the moment Urith forgot all about the presence of Anthony, in the excitement of the announcement.

"A Drift!" Anthony tossed up his head and clasped his hands, and forgot Urith and all else, for a moment, in the excitement of the announcement.

"Ay!" said Uncle Solomon; "and Tom Ever would have bitten out his tongue when he said it, he was so vexed."

CHAPTER XIX.

A DRIFT.

A Drift! What is a Drift?

The vast expanse of Dartmoor, occupying nearly a hundred and fifty thousand acres, for the most part, but not altogether, belongs to the Duchy of Cornwall. Considerable, and, in many cases, fraudulent encroachments have been made on Duchy property—slices taken out of it in past times—and the Duchy agents bribed to turn their eyes away; or simply taken and secured to the squatters by prerogative of long squatting unmolested. The main mass of moor constitutes the ancient and Royal forest of Dartmoor; but much waste land exists outside the forest bounds in the possession of private owners, or as common land, over which the lord of the manor has but manorial rights.

Around the circumference of the moor are, and always have been, stationed certain men having a position under the Duchy, corresponding to that of foresters elsewhere. But, as there are no trees on Dartmoor, these men have no care of timber; nor have they, as foresters elsewhere, the custody of the deer, as there are no red deer in this Royal forest. Red deer there were in times past; but they were all destroyed at the close of last century, when large plantations were made on the moor and in its confines, because the deer killed the young trees.

On account of the rugged and boggy nature of Dartmoor, no Royal hunters had come there since the Saxon kings; consequently, no pains were taken to preserve the deer, and every moorman and squire neighbouring on the wilderness considered that he had a right to supply himself with as much venison from off it as he could eat, and every farmer regarded himself as justified in killing the deer that invaded his fields and swarmed over his crops. The men answering to foresters elsewhere, living under the Duchy, and posted around the borders of the moor, inherited their offices,

which passed in families for generations, and it is probable that the Evers, the Coakers, and the Widdecombes of to-day are the direct descendants of the moormen who were foresters under the Conqueror—nay, possibly, in Saxon times.

They are a fine-built race, fair-haired, blue-eyed, erect, better able to ride than to walk, are bold in speech, and perhaps over-bearing in action, having none above them save God and the Prince of Wales—*the* Duke, the only Duke above their horizon.

Around the forest proper is a wide tract of common-land, indistinguishable from moor proper, and this does not belong to the Duchy, but the Duchy exercises for all that certain rights over this belt of waste. The parishes contiguous on the moor have what are termed Venville rights, that is to say, rights to cut turf and to free pasturage on the moor; the tenants in Venville may be said to have the right to take anything off the moor that may do them good except green oak and venison, or more properly, vert and venison. This has led to the most ruthless destruction of prehistoric antiquities, as every farmer in Venville carries away, as his right, any granite-stone that

commends itself to him as a gate-post or a pillar to prop a cowshed; sheep, bullocks, and horses are turned out on Dartmoor, and the horses and ponies live in all weathers on the wilderness, defy all boundaries, and ask for no care, no shelter, and no winter quarters. Bullocks and sheep have their lairs, and want to be levant and couchant, and to be cared for in winter, and therefore are not driven on to the moors till spring, and are driven off in autumn.

The moor is divided into regions, and over each region is a moorman. In each quarter of the moor a special ear-mark is required for the ponies turned out in that district, a round hole punched in the ear, through which is passed a piece of distinguishing tape, scarlet, blue, white, and black. Ponies wander widely: a herd will disappear from one place and appear at another like magic, in search after pasture; but the moormen of each region claim the fines on the ponies belonging to their region, and, to a certain extent, exercise some sort of supervision over them.

Although every tenant in Venville has an undisputed right to free pasturage, yet it is usual for him to fee the moorman for each

horse or beast he sends out, and, if this be refused, he may find his cattle stray to a very remarkable extent, and be liable to get "stogged" in the bogs, and be lost.

As horses, &c., that are driven on parish commons, or on moors belonging to private individuals, very often leave these quarters for the broader expanse of the Royal forest, it is necessary or deemed advisable on certain days arbitrarily determined on, without notice to any one, to have a "Drift." A messenger is sent round in the night or very early in the morning to the Venville tenants from the moorman of the quarter to summon them to the Drift; on certain tors are upright holed stones, through which horns were passed, and loudly blown, to announce the Drift. All the neighbourhood is on the alert—dogs, men, boys are about, squires and farmers armed with long whips, and formerly with pistols and short swords and bludgeons.

All the ponies and colts on the quarter, not only on Dartmoor Forest, but on all the surrounding zone of waste land, are driven from every nook and corner by mounted horsemen and dogs towards the place of gathering, which is, for the western quarter,

Merivale Bridge. The driving completed, a vast number of ponies and horses of all ages, sizes, colours, and breeds, and men and dogs are collected together in a state of wild confusion. Then an officer of the Duchy mounts a stone and reads to the assembly a formal document with seals attached to it. That ceremony performed, the owners claim their ponies. Venville tenants carry off theirs without objection; others pay fines. Animals unclaimed are driven off to Dinnabridge Pound, a large walled-in field in the midst of the moor, where they remain till demanded, and if unclaimed are sold by the Duchy.*

To this day a Drift causes violent altercations; formerly free fights between Venville tenants and those who were outside the Venville parishes were not uncommon, and blood was not infrequently shed. That a Drift should excite a whole neighbourhood to the utmost may be imagined. The dispersion of the horses by the fire on the moor occasioned the Drift at this unusual time of early spring.

* See an article on Venville rights on Dartmoor, by W. F. Collier, Esq., in the Devon Association Transactions for 1887.

The morning was windy, clouds large and heavy were lumbering over the sky, turning the moor indigo with their shade, and where the sun shone the grey grass, as yet untinged with spring growth, was white as ashes.

On the top of Smerdon stood a gigantic moorsman, with lungs like blacksmith's bellows, blowing a blast through a cow's horn that was heard for miles around. But the yelping of dogs, the shouts of men proclaimed that the world was awake and abroad, and needed no horn to call to attention. Men in rough linsey and frieze coats and leather breeches, high boots, with broad hats, wild-looking as the horses they bestrode and the hounds that bayed about them, galloped in all directions over the turf, shouting, and cracking their long whips. Colts, ponies of every colour, with long manes and flowing tails, wild as any bred on the prairies, leaped, plunged, raced about, snorting, frightened, and were pursued by dogs and men.

Although there was apparent confusion, yet a rude order might be observed. All the men were moved by one common impulse—to drive the horses and ponies

inwards, and though these frightened creatures often broke the ring that was forming, and careered back to the outer downs whence they had been chased, to be pursued again by a host of dogs and men, yet there was observable a rough chain of drivers concentrating towards a point on the Walla, spanned by a bridge under Mistor.

The whole neighbourhood was there—Anthony had come, ashamed to be seen afoot, and yet unwilling not to be there. He saw one of his father's servants on his own horse, and he demanded it; the fellow readily yielded his saddle, and Anthony joyously mounted his favourite roan. Fox Crymes was there, with his eye bandaged, and glancing angrily at Anthony out of the one uninjured eye. Old Squire Cleverdon did not come out, he could no longer sit at ease on horseback, and had never been much of a rider. Mr. Solomon Gibbs was out in a soiled purple coat, and with hat and wig—as was his wont—awry. And Urith was there. She could not remain at home on such an occasion as a Drift. Her Uncle was not to be trusted to recognize and claim the Willsworthy cobs. He was

not to be calculated on. There was a tavern at Merivale Bridge, and there he would probably sit and booze, and leave his colts and mares to take care of themselves. There was no proper hind at the manor, only day labourers, who were poor riders. Therefore Urith was constrained to attend the Drift herself.

She was the only woman present; Julian Crymes had not come out. When Anthony saw Urith he approached her, but she drew away.

"Why, how now!" shouted Fox. "Whose horse are you riding?"

"My own," answered Anthony, shortly.

"Oh! I am glad to hear it. I understood that you had been bundled out of Hall without any of your belongings; but your father I suppose allowed you to ride off on the roan?"

"I will thank you to be silent," said Anthony, angrily.

"Why should I, when even dogs are open-mouthed? And as for Ever and his horn, he is forcing every one to speak in a scream so as to be heard at all. Were you allowed to take off oats and hay as well?"

Anthony spurred his horse, to be out of

ear-shot of his tormentor; but Fox followed him.

"What was it all about?" he asked. "All the country-side is ringing with the news that you and your father are fallen out, and that he has turned you out of doors; but opinions are divided as to the occasion."

"Let them remain divided," answered Anthony, and dug his spurs in so deeply that his horse bounded and dashed away. Fox no longer attempted to keep up with him, but turned to attach himself to Urith. She saw his intention, and drew near to her uncle, who was in conversation with Yeoman Cudlip.

They were now riding through a broad vale or dip between a range of serrated granite heights to the East, and the great volcanic, rounded pile of Cox Tor crowned with vast masses of cairn piled about the blistered basaltic prongs that shot through the turf at the summit. These cairns were probably at one time used as beacons, for all were depressed in the middle to receive the heaps of fern and wood that were ignited to send a signal far away to the very Atlantic on the North, from a warning given on the coast of the English Channel.

The turf was free from masses of boulder, but was in places swampy. At the water-shed was a morass with a spring, and from this point the stream had been laboriously worked in ancient times for tin; the bed was ploughed up and thrown into heaps in the midst of the course.

"Look yonder," said Cudlip. "Do you see that pile o' stones with one piece o' granite atop standing up? There's P. T. cut on that. Did you ever hear tell how Philip Tabb came by his death there? and how he came to lie there? For I tell y' there he be buried, and it is the mark where Peter Tavy parish ends and Tavistock parish begins, and they say he do lie just so that the parish bound goes thro' the middle of him. It all came about in the times of the troubles between the King and the Parliament. Sir Richard Grenville was in Tavistock, and was collecting men for the King; and Lord Essex came up with the Roundheads, and there was some fighting. Then some of the train-band men were out here, and among them was Philip. He was a musketeer; but, bless your soul! he didn't know how to use the piece, and I've heard my father say that was the way with many.

It was an old matchlock, and to fire it he had a fuse alight. Lord Essex was skirmishing round the country, and Sir Richard had set a picket at this point. Well, Philip Tabb, not knowing but the enemy might surprise him from one side or the other, had his fuse alight, and his musket charged. But, by some chance or other, the fuse was uncoiled, and the lighted end hung down behind him and touched the horse on the croup. The beast jumped and kicked, and Tabb could not make it out, for the fuse was behind him. Every time the horse bounded the burning end struck him again in another spot, and he sprang about, and ran this way and that, quite mad; and Philip Tabb, who was never a famous rider, let go his matchlock, and had hard to do to keep his seat. But, though he had dropped the musket, the fuse was twisted round him, and kept bobbing against the horse and making it still madder. Then the beast dashed ahead across the valley, and went head over heels down into the old miners' works, and Philip was flung where you see that stone, and he never breathed or opened his eyes after. 'Twas a curious thing that he fell just on the boundary of both parishes,

and there was no saying whether he lay in one or the other. There was mighty discussion over it. The Peter Tavy men said the body belonged to Tavistock, and the Tavistock men said it belonged to Peter Tavy; and neither parish would bury him, for, you see, he was a poor man, without friends or money."

"Say, rather," threw in Fox, "without money or friends."

"As you like," answered the yeoman, and continued. "Well, it was thought that the parishes would have to go to law over it, to find out which would have to bury him, but after a deal o' trouble they came to an agreement to bury him where he fell, and three Peter Tavy men threw stones over him on one side, and three Tavistock men threw stones the other; and when the stone was set up the Peter Tavy men went to the expense of cutting one letter, P, and the Tavistock men went to the cost of the other letter, T."

"Come," said Mr. Solomon Gibbs, "we are fallen into the rear."

They pricked on, and descended the slope to the river Walla, that foamed and plunged over a floor of broken granite at some depth

below. In the valley, where was the bridge, two or three mountain-ash trees grew; there was an inn and by it a couple of cottages. Here was now a scene of indescribable confusion and noise. The wild, frightened horses and ponies driven together, surrounded on all sides by the drivers, were leaping, plunging over each other, tossing their manes and snorting. The ring had closed about them. Every now and then a man dashed among them, on foot or mounted, when he recognized one of his own creatures, and by force or skill separated it from the rest, shouted to the drivers, who instantly opened a lane, and he drove the scared creature through the lane of men back on to the free wild moor. To affect this demanded daring and skill, and the men rivalled each other in their dexterity in claiming their animals and extricating them from the midst of the crowd of half-frantic creatures, plunging and kicking. Neither Urith or Solomon Gibbs had any intention of attempting such a dangerous feat, but purposed waiting till all other horses had been claimed, when they would indicate their own creatures, and the good-humoured moormen of their quarter would discharge

them. Accordingly they remained passive observers, and the sight was one full of interest and excitement; for the extrication of the horses claimed was a matter of personal danger, and demanded courage, a quick eye, great resolution, and activity.

Fox Crymes had no intention of venturing within the ring; he was standing on foot near Anthony's horse. Anthony was awaiting his time when he would rush in to the capture of his father's colts. All eyes but those of Urith's were riveted on the struggle with the horses. There were some tall men, or men on large horses, between her and the herd of wild creatures, and as she could not well see what went on within the ring, she looked towards Anthony.

She was a little surprised at the conduct of Fox. In the first place he seemed to be paying no attention to what was engrossing the minds and engaging the eyes of the rest. He held a little back from Anthony, and was striking a light with a flint and a steel that he had taken from his pocket.

What could be his purpose?

Urith was puzzled. Fox was no smoker.

She noticed that he had a piece of amadou under the flint, and the sparks fell on it; it

kindled, and Fox enclosed it within his hollowed hand and blew it into a glow.

Then he looked hastily about him, but did not observe Urith. His bandaged eye was towards her, or he must have seen that she was watching him, and watching him with perplexity.

Then he took three steps forward.

Urith uttered a cry of dismay.

Fox had thrust the fragment of burning amadou into the ear of the horse Anthony rode.

END OF VOL. I.

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